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Libya disbands 'unity ministry'

CAIRO (AP) — Libya will disband a ministry responsible for promoting Arab unity to protest Arab inaction to have U.N. sanctions lifted, the official Libyan news agency reported Sunday. It said the Libyan Parliament will abolish the General People's Committee for Libyan Unity at its next session. It did not give a date. The decision to disband the ministry was in line with Libya's "belonging to the African continent," the agency, JANA, said. It was monitored by the British Broadcasting News Agency. Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi has sharply criticised Arab countries for their failure to support Libya to have the sanctions lifted.

Jordan Times

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Iran vows 'appropriate action' to ensure the region's security

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's top security body said on Saturday the country had the right to take "appropriate action" to ensure peace and security in the region as tension with Afghanistan rose after the killing of nine Iranian diplomats.

The National Security Council met under the chairmanship of President Mohammad Khatami after Iran announced it would strengthen its forces on the Afghan border.

Iran on Saturday started three days of national mourning for the nine Iranian diplomats killed when Taleban Islamic militia forces seized the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif last month.

A National Security Council official quoted by the state-run IRNA news agency said: "Iran is consistently entitled to every appropriate action, and the country would proceed with arrangements for establishing peace and security in the region." "The council commissioned all relevant authorities in Iran to consider every possible channel for protecting Iran's national interests and maintaining regional peace and security and to adopt appropriate measures for ensuring those purposes," IRNA said.

The council decided to maintain Iranian troops cur-

rently deployed at the border with Afghanistan "to protect Iran's territorial integrity and prevent any possible challenge" by the Taleban, IRNA quoted the official as saying.

Iran said on Saturday it planned to strengthen its forces on the border where it has 70,000 men in a face-off with the Taleban over the diplomats killed in Afghanistan.

Iran said more than 200,000 of its troops backed by the air force would soon hold war games along the border.

The manoeuvres come amid mounting tension between the Islamic Republic and the Taleban over the killing of the diplomats and attacks by the Sunni Muslim militia against the Shi'ite stronghold of Bamian in central Afghanistan — the last Afghan city outside Taleban control.

Iranian leaders have vowed to avenge the killings of the diplomats.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they would punish those responsible for the killings if the Taleban and Pakistan failed to meet Iran's demands.

Iran has demanded the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for the killings. It demanded the return of the bodies and the release of other Iranians held by the Taleban.

Government condoles Iran over slaying of diplomats

By Alia A. Toukan

AMMAN — The government on Sunday sent a condolence letter to Iran over the killing of nine Iranian diplomats by the Taleban movement in Afghanistan last week, a senior Jordanian official said yesterday.

"We paid our condolences and condemned the killings as contrary to Islamic teachings," Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib told the Jordan Times.

The letter was sent from Khatib to his Iranian counterpart, Kamal Kharazi.

The diplomats were found dead on Thursday after having disappeared in the northern Afghan city of Mazar Sharif on Aug. 8.

'Taleban took Bamian'

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's official IRNA news agency reported Sunday that the city of Bamian, the last major opposition stronghold in Afghanistan, had fallen to the Taleban Islamic militia.

"The city of Bamian in central Afghanistan fell to the Taleban on Sunday following fierce battles starting with the Taleban's bombardment of the city on Saturday, reliable Afghan sources have announced," IRNA said in a report from Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan.

"We regret some renegade persons committed the murders without the knowledge of the Taleban leadership," a Taleban official said yesterday.

The Islamic state Saturday began its three days of national mourning over the killings, while tension between Iran and Afghanistan continues to rise as Iranian officials remain undecided on how to respond to the incident.

Jordanian-Iranian relations have witnessed a growing rapprochement since HRH Crown Prince Hassan attended the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit held in Tehran last December, the first such high-level visit to Iran since the revolution that toppled Jordan's close ally Shah Reza Pahlavi in 1979.

The Sunni Muslim Taleban militia said earlier Sunday its fighters had captured the Shiite town of Bamian. But a spokesman in Pakistan for the Hezb-i-Wahdat militia controlling the town denied that it had been captured and said it was still under the movement's control.

Bamian has a Shiite population of around 10,000 and fears of reprisal killings by the Taleban have been voiced by predominantly Shiite Iran, which has put tens of thousands of troops on the border.

Policeman shot dead, officer injured while investigating armed robberies

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — One policeman was killed and an officer seriously injured while on the line of duty Saturday night.

The two policemen had stopped a car with two passengers for questioning in connection with attacks on two pharmacies one hour earlier, officials said Sunday.

According to Minister of Information Nasser Judeh, the policemen stopped the two suspects driving a rented Hyundai, after a chase near Sweileh.

Unexpectedly, a suspect stepped out of the car and fired at one of the policemen, hitting him in the chest, Judeh said during a weekly press briefing yesterday.

He said the other officer then tried to overpower the assailants, but was shot in

the chin. The bullet, landing in the officer's armpit, killed him immediately.

According to Abdul Rahim Issa, the president of the Jordanian Pharmacists Association, "two pharmacies on Gardens Street, Al Aseel and Al Kherbawi, were raided earlier on Saturday night by unknown men who threatened to use their guns unless the owner handed over the cash in the register."

"The attackers stole JD300 from Al Aseel Pharmacy, but we do not know how much they stole from the second," Issa said.

According to Judeh, the owner of one of the pharmacies [Al Kherbawi] was shot in the leg by one of the assailants. Both assailants fled the scene immediately.

A witness gave police a description of the assailant's car, including

the licence plate number which indicated it was rented. The authorities immediately dispatched patrols around the capital searching for the armed robbers, added Judeh.

The injured police officer is hospitalised in serious condition, the minister added.

Sources said police set up major checkpoints around Amman and posted the suspects' names — obtained from the car rental agency — at all border posts. The suspects' family members have also been called for questioning, said the sources.

"Judeh said the authorities expect to apprehend the suspects very soon."

Earlier this year, one pharmacist was killed and another seriously injured in an attack widely believed to be carried out by drug addicts.

The Pharmacists Association is considering methods to protect members after a spate of attacks on their establishments.

"The problem is that working in pharmacies is no longer feasible, there are lots of pharmacies in the Kingdom, which make it very difficult for the pharmacy owner to hire a bodyguard or install a video camera or even an alarm connected to the police station," said Issa.

The association, he said, has repeatedly asked the government to ensure better protection of pharmacies with stepped up police patrols.

He complained that although the police promised to organise patrols on pharmacies, but officers never come regularly, and most of the time they never appear.

Bashir: We are determined to improve ties with Egypt

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir said he is determined to defuse tensions between his country and Egypt, a local newspaper reported Sunday. Bashir and Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail, who leaves for Cairo on Tuesday, have hammered out a series of measures for "defusing the tension" between Khartoum and Cairo, the Al Rai Al Akher daily said, quoting an unnamed source.

The newspaper said the initiative was partly prompted by Egypt's criticism of a U.S. missile attack on a Khartoum pharmaceutical plant on August 20 which had "a positive impact" leading to a unanimous Arab League resolution condemning the strike.

The Sudanese president was also pleased by Egypt's response to torrential rains that have flooded many parts of the African state.

On Saturday, Egypt flew in a plane-load of jute and tents to the flood-stricken country.

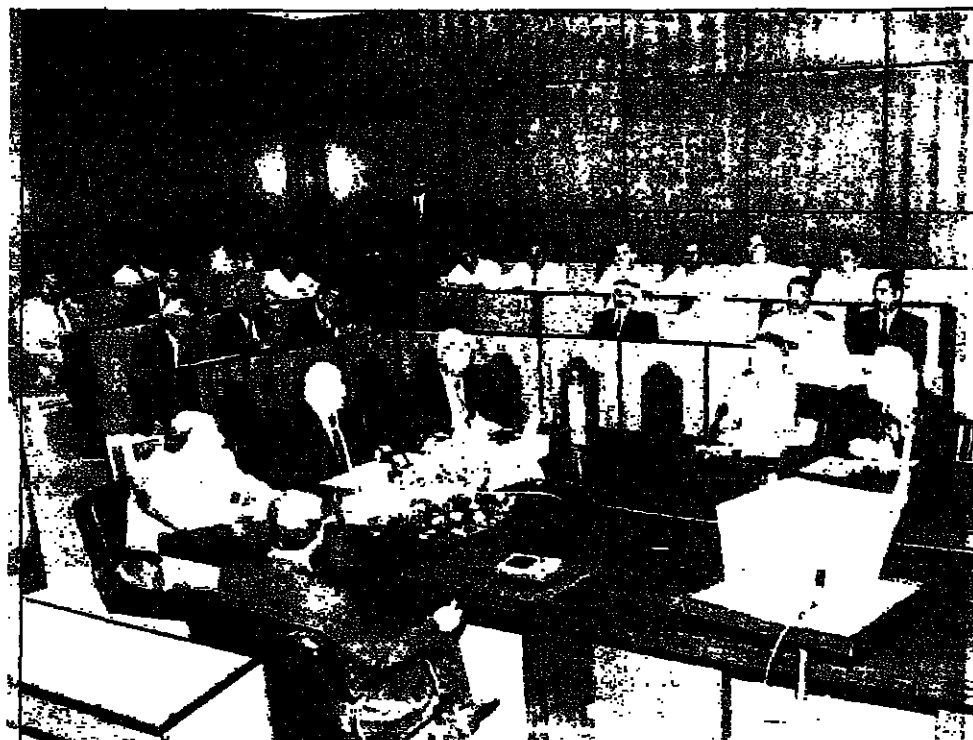
On Saturday, Egypt flew in a plane-load of jute and tents to the flood-stricken country.

Qattan replaces outgoing director Bilal Tal, who has been reassigned to an advisory position at the Prime Ministry.

The minister said he applauded Tal's service at the department, saying he had done his job faithfully to the best of his abilities, while telling journalists, who applauded Qattan's appointment, that a change in PPD director did not equal a change in policy.

Kuwait to rush flood relief goods to Sudan

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said Sunday it will send immediate relief goods to aid flood victims in Sudan, a country at odds with the Gulf Arab state since the 1991 Gulf crisis. Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah "has ordered the sending of relief stuffs and humanitarian aid urgently to Sudan to help the brotherly Sudanese people and contribute to the easing of their suffering," said a statement issued after the weekly cabinet meeting. Sudan, with a population of 32 million, is experiencing its worst floods since 1988. The Sudanese Health Ministry says some 10,000 million people have been affected. Kuwait's ties with fellow Arab Sudan soured in 1990 when the African state appeared to sympathise with Iraq when it seized and occupied Kuwait for seven months. The two states have yet to normalise ties.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, attends a session of a seminar held by the Petra School of Physics, on Sunday (Photo by Boghos)

Crown Prince urges scientific institutions to work together to meet society's needs

IRBID (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday urged Jordan's scientific institutions and universities to increase their coordination and cooperation in scientific research and in organising scientific conferences to cater to the needs of Jordanian society.

In remarks at the closing session of a seminar organised by the Petra School of Physics held at Yarmouk University, the Regent called on these institutions to adopt a comprehensive methodology that would deepen inter-disciplinary integration among the various scientific specialisations and reap the maximum benefit of scientific research.

In his view, scientific conferences organised by universities and scientific research institutions should, as a priority, tackle questions which have a direct effect on or are connected with the special needs of Jordanian society. Praising the high level and

advanced standard of the Petra School of Physics Prince Hassan noted that the present seminar has been organised for the purpose of discussing the latest developments in the modern world of physics and its applications.

The current seminar is the sixth organised by the Petra School of Physics which was established in 1980 under the patronage of Prince Hassan and in cooperation with the International Physics Centre established by Pakistani physicist Abdul Salam, a Nobel Prize laureate.

Also Sunday, Prince Hassan met participants in a scientific seminar organised by the University of Muta and the Jordan University of Science and Technology expressing his pride in this distinguished effort noting that the seminar, which deals with field emissions, is being held for the first time in a Third World country.

In remarks at the meeting, Prince Hassan underlined the

importance of developing and supporting scientific research that caters to the national needs and requirements.

He said Jordanian universities ought to build bridges of continuous coordination and contacts with advanced scientific research centres worldwide, so that their work can have a positive impact on scientific research in Jordan and be of benefit to the local community.

Prince Hassan expressed satisfaction with the level of cooperation between the state universities and the Petra School of Physics to organise the seminar.

Present at the two meetings were Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai, who is also chairman of the board of trustees of Yarmouk University, Mohammad Harman, secretary general of the Higher Council for Science and Technology and Saeed Aloush, president of the Royal Scientific Society.

Algerian politicians fear instability after leader's surprise step-down

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian politicians, still reeling from the surprise announcement that President Liamine Zeroual is to quit, expressed fears for the stability of the state Sunday.

A main fear was that the army, which some say is divided over its strategy against armed Islamists, will now be without a head, as Zeroual was also defence minister.

Zeroual took the whole country by surprise Friday when he announced early presidential elections for February 1999 in which he said he would not be standing.

He had won a five-year mandate in the country's first multi-party presiden-

tial polls in 1995 with a pledge to fight the armed Islamist insurgency, which has left an estimated 70,000 dead since 1992, and to establish a pluralistic democracy.

Political party leaderships quickly met to prepare their election campaigns and work out how to tackle the strict electoral conditions for candidates.

Candidates are legally bound to collect 75,000 signatures from voters or 600 from local representatives in more than half of the country's 48 districts.

The Democratic National Rally (RND), regarded as Zeroual's party, met behind closed doors Saturday but had made no public statement Sunday, reflecting the

party's confusion.

The Front of Socialist Forces (FSF) warned all political players against acts that might lead to chaos in the country.

The Islamist Annahda (Rebirth) Party said it regretted "this decision taken in a very difficult context" while maintaining that the president "should have consulted the political classes."

The daily Liberté said that Zeroual took the decision to quit Wednesday during a meeting with army leaders and officials from the constitutional council.

Most newspapers blamed the move on factional infighting within the government which the president could no longer control.

JPA should shoulder responsibility of holding journalists accountable — Judeh

By Amy Henderson

AMMAN — Minister of Information Nasser Judeh Sunday indicated that the government expects the Jordan Press Association (JPA) to shoulder a greater responsibility in holding journalists accountable for unethical or illegal behaviour in a new phase of relations between the government and the press.

"We hope that we will reach the day, through dialogue and open communication, that we will have an appropriate mechanism to control the work of the information ministry in dealing with the media and in referring cases against the press to the [Jordan Press] Association," said Judeh, addressing journalists at a weekly press briefing.

"Through this mechanism,

the association can take the appropriate measures against violators of the law instead of having to refer violators to court."

Journalists are obliged by law to subscribe to the JPA before legally practising their profession. However, the association has generally been regarded as weak in defending the rights of journalists, and weaker still in obliging journalists to uphold a minimum of professional standards.

Judeh also said the new JPA law, endorsed by both houses of Parliament earlier this summer, was signed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday.

The legislation opens the way to membership in the association of employees of the government-owned Jordan Radio and Television for the

first time, and has the potential to bring the number of government employees in the association to more than half of the total membership. But it makes no reference to the association's responsibility in defending the rights of journalists.

The law was drafted during the reign of the last government at the height of the row between the government and the press over the 1998 Press and Publications Law, but was separate from that legislation.

At the time, journalists said that the two laws together constituted an "encirclement" of the press.

Judeh, who assumed his post on Aug. 20, has assured journalists that the government intends a "soft implementation" of the new press law while establishing a

mechanism that would ensure this. The formation of a Royal Committee is being considered to study relevant options.

Judeh also announced yesterday that Iyad Qattan, newly-appointed Press and Publications Department director, would assume his post on the 16th or 17th of this month.

Qattan replaces outgoing director Bilal Tal, who has been reassigned to an advisory position at the Prime Ministry.

The minister said he applauded Tal's service at the department, saying he had done his job faithfully to the best of his abilities, while telling journalists, who applauded Qattan's appointment, that a change in PPD director did not equal a change in policy.

G-7 officials gather for Russia meeting

LONDON (R) — Senior financial and foreign ministry officials from the Group of Seven (G-7) countries gather in London on Monday for an emergency meeting on the Russian financial crisis as Moscow promised a stabilisation plan for the embattled rouble.

Against a background of debt default by Russia and a rising crisis of confidence in Latin America, the choice by Russia on Friday of Soviet-era officials for its government raised fears in Western coun-

tries of a return to central planning and hyperinflation.

But sources close to Monday's talks told Reuters the fact that Russia now had a government after three weeks of stalemate had reduced the sense of panic that was building when British Prime Minister Tony Blair called the meeting a week ago.

The approval of former foreign minister and spy master Yevgeny Primakov as prime minister, and of former central bank chief Victor Geraschenko to run the central bank,

did not inspire confidence in nervous financial markets.

But President Boris Yeltsin on Saturday said Russia would stay on the reform path and Primakov pledged to pay off the country's debts — a growing worry after Friday's news that Russia had failed to make most of an 800 million mark (\$475 million) interest payment on so-called Paris Club debt. On Sunday, new First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov said the government would present a plan to stabilise the country's currency

on Monday and have an economic programme ready by the end of the week.

The G-7 countries — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — have made it clear that no further cash will be forthcoming if Russia strays from the reform path. So they will be hungry for clues about the new economic plan.

"We don't know how much they will have for us but it will be interesting to find out," an official close to the talks told Reuters.

Israeli attack dogs led assault that killed Hamas chiefs

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli special forces used attack dogs to lead the raid that killed two Hamas chiefs last week and only shot the militants when they raised their weapons at the animals, a senior officer said Sunday.

Releasing the first details of the killing Thursday of brothers Adel and Imad Awadallah, Major General Moshe Yaalon strongly denied Israeli press reports that the two Islamists were summarily executed while they slept in an isolated West Bank farmhouse.

"The order was to try to arrest them," he told a briefing for foreign reporters. But he said the two men were armed and the raiding police "were forced to fire and kill them."

"I would have preferred to arrest them in order to be able to interrogate them," he said. Yaalon, who heads the army command responsible for the West Bank and personally directed Thursday's operation, acknowledged for the first time that Israel believed the two militants in the farmhouse were the Awadallah brothers even before the raid.

"We didn't know for sure both of them were there, but we had our suspicions because of their behaviour," he said.

Adel Awadallah, 31, was the chief of the military wing of Hamas in the West Bank, seconded by Imad, 27.

They were among Israel's most wanted men for organising a spate of attacks inside Israel and against Israelis in the occupied territories.

Yaalon said Israeli security forces were drawn to their hideout in the village of Taybeh near Hebron by sounds of gunfire and explosions reported in the area on Wednesday.

Agents kept the house under surveillance for two days, spotting two men armed with pistols and grenades walking around the building.

Yaalon said he ordered an assault after the owner of the house was arrested driving away from the property Thursday afternoon and told interrogators the two men inside had just eaten and were preparing to take a nap.

A unit of special forces from the paramilitary border police charged the building behind attack dogs sent in to divert the suspects' attention, he said.

"They tried to shoot the dogs and our men killed them," he said.

The Awadallah brothers were each armed with a pistol and an automatic weapon at the time and had not been sleeping, he said.

Yaalon declined to confirm or deny press reports that Palestinian security forces helped the Israelis track down the Awadallah brothers.

Such reports were fuelled by the fact that Imad Awadallah

had been arrested by Palestinian police earlier this year but broke out of jail on Aug. 15 in unclear circumstances.

Asked if the Palestinians may have let Imad escape or cooperated in helping Israeli forces track him to his brother, Yaalon simply said that the security forces from the two sides had worked together in the past but that "this collaboration should be secret in the interests of both sides."

However a senior army intelligence official speaking on condition of anonymity categorically denied that Palestinian police had played any role in locating the Awadallahs.

Yaalon said Israel was taking seriously threats by Hamas to avenge the Awadallahs, but noted that the West Bank branch of the movement's armed wing had been seriously weakened by the brothers' slaying and a series of other recent setbacks.

He identified the most dangerous Hamas militant still at large in the West Bank as Mahmud Abu Hanud, from the Nablus area, while the movement's military chief in the Gaza Strip, Mohammad Deif, was also still operative.

The general said Israel would bury the Awadallah brothers since a funeral in their home town of Ramallah would likely spark violent protests.



GUERRILLAS MARCH AT REFUGEE CAMP: Masked Palestinian guerrillas march Sunday during a military parade held in the Ain Al Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near the port city of Sidon in south Lebanon. Some 250 Palestinian radical guerrillas held a military parade to protest the fifth anniversary of the September 13, 1993 Oslo peace deal that was signed on the White House lawn with then Prime Minister Rabin, Yasser Arafat and President Bill Clinton (Reuters photo)

JPA threatens suspensions for non-paying members

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Pharmacists Association has threatened to suspend the membership of 1,300 members for not paying their membership fees, JPA President Abdul Rahim Issa said Sunday.

"The general assembly of the association decided Saturday to give the dodgers a grace period of one month starting Saturday, Sept. 12, before cancelling their membership," said Issa.

He said the association will not be lenient with those who do not pay their dues to the Social Security Fund and Pension Fund. He added that members' payments to those two institutions are behind by JD500,000.

According to Article 50 of the association's law, a member loses his/her membership if he/she does not pay the required fees for six consecutive months and after receiving a warning. A defaulting member also loses all the saving funds he/she has accrued.

Key Iran official survives assassination attempt

TEHRAN (R) — The head of a powerful Iranian state foundation survived an assassination attempt Sunday, the official news agency IRNA reported.

It said unknown gunmen opened fire on Mohsen Rafiqdoust from hills overlooking his office in north Tehran.

"He was not hurt at all and is in full health," the agency reported after interviewing Rafiqdoust, a former minister.

"I came to my office as usual this morning and, as I was working, the room came under fire through the window behind me," the agency quoted Rafiqdoust as saying.

"This terrorist act shows that anti-revolutionary elements had worked a long time on their evil plan. But, thanks to God, they were not successful," Rafiqdoust was quoted as saying.

State television showed footage of the office, with what appeared to be bullet holes in a window pane and a ceiling or wall panel.

The attempt on Rafiqdoust, a veteran political figure in the Islamic Republic, followed the assassination last month of Iran's former prison director, Assadollah Lajevardi.

The Iraq-based Iranian armed opposition group Mujahideen Khalq claimed responsibility for killing Lajevardi, accusing him of being responsible for the torture and execution of political prisoners.

The Mujahideen, which has often launched cross-border raids into Iran from Iraq, has stepped up attacks inside Iran in recent months. It was designated by the United States as a foreign "terrorist" organisation last year.

Rafiqdoust, 58, heads the Bonyad-e Mostazafan

va Janbazan (Foundation of the Deprived and War Disabled) which is Iran's top economic conglomerate. It controls most hotels and hundreds of firms, including many industrial plants.

The foundation was set up after the 1979 Islamic revolution with properties seized from the late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and other leaders of the old regime.

Originally formed as a welfare agency to help the poor, the state-affiliated foundation was later also assigned the duty of caring for the disabled from the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. Its head is named by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Rafiqdoust, a leading conservative, formerly served as minister of the Revolutionary Guards when the guards were run as a separate ministry.

Sudan receives foreign aid for flood victims

KHARTOUM (R) — Relief supplies from at least three Arab countries have started to arrive in Sudan, where officials say floods spilling into 12 of the country's 26 states have affected 10 million people, newspapers said Sunday.

The privately-owned Al Rai Al Aam daily said an Egyptian plane arrived at Khartoum airport on Friday carrying 32 tonnes of tents and jute sacks for making sandbags.

It said Egypt was expected to send another plane on Sunday with more tents, medicine and a team of Egyptian doctors.

On Saturday, state television showed two Libyan planes landing at Dongola airport in northern state. It said they had brought medicine, tents and food, but gave no quantities.

The Libyan flights violated an air embargo imposed on Libya by the United Nations in 1992 for failing to hand over two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over the Scottish

town of Lockerbie.

Last month Libya sent a plane of medicine to Sudan after a U.S. missile strike destroyed a Khartoum medicine plant which Washington said was producing a nerve gas component.

Sudanese television said a charity organisation in Qatar had sent flood relief aid to Sudan. It quoted Hassan Dahawi, state minister in the Social Planning Ministry, as saying the goods had been transferred to 10 trucks for the journey north.

The health ministry says 10 million people, or 38 per cent of the population, have been affected by Sudan's worst floods since 1988.

Khartoum newspapers Sunday quoted Health Ministry Undersecretary Bashir Mukhar as saying the ministry required 15 billion pounds (\$7.1 million) to prevent epidemics of dysentery and malaria in flood-hit areas over the next three months.

Nine killed in Algerian bombing

ALGIERS (R) — Three home-made bombs exploded Sunday in different parts of Algeria, killing five people, and a "terrorist" attack killed four others, APS news agency said.

Six other people were wounded in the three blasts, it said.

Quoting a security forces statement, APS said two bombs went off in Meslem and Sidi Bouzid hamlets, some 350 kilometres south of Algiers.

The agency said the first exploded in Meslem at 7.30 a.m. local time and

killed two people, while the other went off at the same time in Sidi Bouzid, killing two and wounding another.

A third bomb exploded at around 12.40 local time near a coffee shop in Constantine commune, 350 kilometres east of Algiers. One person died and five were wounded, according to a preliminary report, APS said.

APS said four more people were killed "in a cowardly manner" Saturday night in Chlef province, 170 kilometres west of Algiers. It said the four

were murdered on a countryside road "by a group of terrorists."

The official media usually use the word "terrorist" to describe Islamists.

No independent sources were available for comment on the fresh wave of violence in Algeria's long-running strife pitting Islamists against the military-backed government.

The bomb blasts were the first since President Liamine Zeroual announced Friday night a decision to hold early presidential elections in February 1999.

PKK withdraws ceasefire – report

ANKARA (AFP) — The separatist Kurdish rebel organisation, the PKK, has withdrawn its unilateral ceasefire two weeks after it came into force and vowed to step up attacks in Turkey, a Turkish newspaper reported Sunday.

"They [Turkey] did not abide by the truce we declared," the Turkish

Daily News quoted PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan as saying on the pro-PKK television channel Med-TV, broadcasting from Europe.

"We have developed new war tactics and will intensify our attacks," the rebel leader said.

Ocalan announced an unconditional and unilater-

al ceasefire in August that was to come into effect on September 1 and last until Turkish elections in April.

The Turkish government and army rejected the truce, accusing the PKK of trying to gain time to regroup its weakened forces and calling on Ocalan to surrender.

Clashes in Turkey's southeast continued in Sep-

tember despite the truce offer.

The outlawed PKK has conducted an armed rebellion against Ankara in the predominantly Kurdish southeast of Turkey since 1984 with the aim of creating an independent Kurdish state.

More than 30,000 people have died in the violence.

Israel's electronics group Elscint sells two divisions to foreign investors

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's electronics group Elscint on Sunday said it had sold two of its divisions to Britain's General Electric Company (GEC) and U.S.-based General Electric

Corporation (GE) for \$375 million. Elscint will sell its division specialising in nuclear medicine and magnetic resonance imaging to GE Medical Systems, a subsidiary of

GE, for \$100 million. The group will also sell its computer tomography division to GEC Picker International, a GEC subsidiary, for \$275 million. Elscint, which is main-

ly involved in medical imaging, had a \$311 million turnover last year, 83 per cent of which came from exports. The group announced a net profit of \$2.7 million over the same period.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10Cartoon — Highlander
15:30 Drama — The Game From Down Under
16:00Drama — Neighbours
16:30Drama — Last Frontiers
17:00Flood Programme — Tadous
18:00Drama — Sea Quest
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Programme — Science Actualites
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — H.P. and Gloria
20:00Prospective
20:30World Net
21:10Good Guys, Bad Guys
22:00News in English
22:30Miniseries — Touching Evil
23:29End of T.N.

PRAYER TIMES

04:55Fajr
06:14Sunrise: Doha
12:31Dhuhr
16:03Asr
18:49Maghrib
20:07Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swerdloff, Tel. 5925740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

American Church Tel.
4624534/4624811
St. Atram Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4771751
Ammann International Church
Tel. 5925997
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5982404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 581295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4634932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 7601757
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
4637240
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
448136
Church of Presentation, Swe-
dloff Tel. 5920145
The United Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757
The English-Langauge Catholic
Parish Tel. 4614100
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
5926790
The Baptist Church Tel.
4620652
The Armenian Catholic Church
4771231
The Armenian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with clouds appearing at low altitudes particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds to be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman17/31
Aqaba25/39
Deserts16/35
Jordan Valley24/38

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 29 Aqaba 38 Humidity
readings: Amman 45 per cent,
Aqaba 41 per cent.

Following are the highest temper-
atures expected today in the fol-
lowing areas:
Ajloun27
Jerash32
Um Qays33
Madaba32
Petra34
Dead Sea39

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-
ment of Meteorology

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Tushug4757253

Dr. Bahjat Bader5332642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim5350432
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi4893542
Firas pharmacy5661912
Al Asema pharmacy5347632
Nairoukh pharmacy4623672
Al Salam pharmacy4636730
Yacoub pharmacy4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy4637660
Najib pharmacy5347632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh250080
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan3851743
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade4617101
Blood Bank4775121
Traffic Police4896390
Public Security Dept.4630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints4897467
Water & Sewerage Complaints4897467
Ammann Municipality Complaints4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Televisi.4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic Abdi5661317
Hussain Medical Centre5856556
Luzmila4630195
Khalidi Maternity46428116
Akileh Maternity46424112
Jabal Amman Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5669131
University Hospital5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital56672279
Al-Ahli, Abdali56641646
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Marka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital5602240/50
Amal Hospital4891611/15

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)990999
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
J. Electricity Authority44-53200-5
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:05Sanana (RJ)
09:30Jeddah (RJ)
09:30Damascus (RJ)
09:45New Delhi (RJ)

10:20Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:55Beirut (RJ)
17:00Cairo (RJ)
17:30London (RJ)
17:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:15Istanbul (RJ)
18:45Kuwait (RJ)
19:40Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
21:45Bangkok, Sharjah (RJ)
02:55 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
03:00Doha (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

10:30Cairo (MS)
14:10Bahrain (GF)
15:05Vienna (OS)
15:40Doha (QR)
15:45Khartoum (SD)
18:40Beirut (ME)
19:05Frankfurt (LH)
19:45Dubai (EK)
22:15Istanbul (SD)
22:25Tel Aviv (LY)
23:45Athens, Beirut (OA)
01:30 Amsterdam, Damascus (EK)

Royal Wings (RW)

10:20 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
22:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
23:25 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15Beirut (RJ)
08:00 Dhahran, New Delhi (add) (RJ)
11:45Frankfurt, London (RJ)
12:30Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:30Istanbul (RJ)
12:45Kuwait (RJ)
13:15Cairo (RJ)
21:00Doha (add) (RJ)
21:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:40Damascus (RJ)
22:05Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
23:25Al 'Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
23:25Tehran (RJ)
23:45Sanana (RJ)

Other Flights

06:15Istanbul (TK)
06:35Larnaca (CY)
07:30Paris (AF)
08:20London (AF)
11:30Cairo (MS)
15:00Bahrain (GF)
15:50Vienna (OS)
16:30Doha (QR)
16:45Istanbul (SD)
20:00Beirut (ME)
20:45Dubai (EK)
23:10Tel Aviv (LY)
23:15Khartoum (SD)
02:30Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)

08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
21:30 Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW)
21:30Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Home
Governme
iterates
call for
Iraq-U.S.
dialogue
By Faray Ayyoub
AMMAN — A senior official of the Jordanian government has called for a dialogue between the two countries, saying that the current situation is not sustainable and that a peaceful resolution is the only way forward. The official, who spoke at a press conference, emphasized the need for mutual understanding and cooperation between the two nations to address the ongoing tensions. He also mentioned that the Jordanian government is committed to maintaining its neutrality and supporting the peace process in the region.

UNRW
strike d
By Ghaila Al-Jal
AMMAN — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has announced a strike by its staff in response to the withdrawal of its funding by the United States. The strike is set to begin on Monday, September 14, and will last for several days. The UNRWA officials expressed their disappointment and frustration over the decision, which they believe will severely impact the agency's ability to provide essential services to the Palestinian refugees. They called on the international community to pressure the U.S. to resume its funding.

WHAT'S
"Lala Monte" at the
am and 6:30 p.m.
TUNISIAN
"Al-Shaykh" at
6:00 p.m. (Another Sig
on Tuesday) Sig
L.E.
"The Islamic World a
New Century" in the
Arab Harwood Show
6:30 p.m.
EXH
Photography
"Amies a Paris" at the
Jordanian Plastic Art
5
Paintings by Iraqi ar
Rashid and Khalid Q
at Orfali Art Gal
3 (Tel. 5526932)
Paintings by Rula S
Gore, Jabal Amman, un
Exhibition of wroug
Salim Al Bawdeh (T
Tel. 5862331), u
DARAT AL FUNKUN
Summer 98" cultural
fest Weidheh, to last un
EXH
30 years of graphic a
Jordanian artist Sahe) H
Works by Iraqi artist
Said Haddadin in
Installation works by
the Byzantine Church.
Jordanian artist Hussein

Protestors storm Albanian PM's office after leading opposition politician killed

TRANA (AP) — Crowds angry at the slaying of an opposition leader stormed the main Albanian government building Sunday, setting fire to the ground floor as Prime Minister Fatos Nano and his ministers scurried out the rear exit.

The crackle of gunfire and explosions from government cars set afire echoed through the streets of this unstable, former Communist capital. At least two people were wounded, police said, including an officer of the Republic Guard unit defending Nano's office.

Opposition leader Sali Berisha appealed for calm until Monday's funeral of slain ally, Azem Hajdari. But Berisha, speaking from the balcony of his Democratic Party headquarters, warned that if Nano did not resign within 24 hours, he would face "catastrophic consequences."

Berisha's followers, some of them weeping over Hajdari's death, chanted "kill, kill, kill Faros Nano." Berisha, the former president, spoke to the crowd about a kilometre from the prime minister's office, where protesters marched earli-

Members of the crowd fired shots at police around the headquarters of the Interior Ministry and the prime minister's office. Troops responded with volleys of gunfire over the protesters' heads.

When they arrived at the three-story prime minister's office, protesters set fire to several government vehicles, then pushed their way into the ground floor, which they also set ablaze.

Outside, witnesses could hear gunfire from inside the building as fuel tanks from the blazing cars exploded.

The attack took place while Nano and his Cabinet were holding an emergency meeting on the deteriorating situation following Hajdari's slaying. The ministers scurried out the rear door through smoke and explosions.

Hajdari, a former student leader known as "The Hero" for his opposition to Albanian Communist rule, was shot by gunmen from two parked cars as he left the party headquarters.

He died later in hospital.

along with one of his two bodyguards, police said.

Hajdari's supporters planned to transfer his body to the sprawling Skanderberg Square in the heart of the capital for an all-night vigil until the funeral service at 11 a.m. (0900 GMT) Monday.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. But Berisha blamed Nano's party. The former president, in a statement Sunday, gave Nano 24 hours to resign or the opposition would use "all means" to force him out.

Nearly a year ago, Hajdari was shot and badly wounded in Parliament by a rival legislator, who was later convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to 11 years in jail.

The shooting was likely to inflame tensions in already-unstable Albania, where Berisha's Democratic Party has tried to organise mass resistance against the Socialist Party government that replaced it last year.

After Hajdari was shot on Sept. 18, 1997, the Democratic Party ordered days of protests against Nano and his Socialist-



Malaysia's Anwar steps up anti-Mahathir attacks as thousands flock to rallies

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Ousted deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim returned here Sunday from weekend rallies in northern Malaysia where tens of thousands heard his verbal assaults on Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Anwar, who was stripped of Mahathir of his cabinet posts and expelled from the ruling party earlier this month, made immediate preparations for a second trip out of the capital to the southern city of Malacca.

Aides said he would arrive in Malacca late Sunday.

Saturday, Anwar stepped up his attacks on Mahathir in speeches to tens of thousands of supporters in his home state of Penang and neighbouring Kedah.

Venturing out of the capital for the first time since his dismissal on Sept. 2, Anwar visited his home town of Bukit Mertajam in Penang before driving 100 kilometres further north to Pokok Sena, where an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people gathered late Saturday night.

Cars were backed up some seven kilometres along the jungle road leading to Pokok Sena in what was the biggest show of support since Anwar was dismissed by Mahathir as deputy premier and finance minister.

In remarks published Sunday, Mahathir vowed to "take action" against Anwar if he "disrupts public order" on his national tour to press for reform.

"But if it is peaceful, we will not take any action," he was quoted as saying by the New Sunday Times.

Mahathir also asserted that ruling party members who had sided with Anwar would eventually be swayed once the case against him goes to court.

"Up to now, they still don't believe what we have said. But in the end when there is a trial, a lot of things will be exposed and then they will believe us. The truth will prevail," he reportedly said.

"Those who don't want to believe are only deceiving themselves," Mahathir said, indicating that police had sufficient evidence against Anwar.

Although he has yet to be charged, the 51-year-old Anwar faces allegations ranging from sexual impropriety, bribery and jeopardising national security to interfering with police investigations, abuse of power and sedition.

Mahathir, 73, has not yet given a full explanation for the dismissal of his former protege, merely saying that he was "unsuitable" to hold office and that his decision to fire Anwar was based on moral grounds.

Anwar, who says the allegations are part of a high-level conspiracy, has strongly denied suggestions of immoral conduct.

"Those who say this should first look at their own reflection in the mirror," he told an estimated 10,000 supporters outside his family home Saturday.

"The more he criticises me, the more people come to listen to me."

Although he did not mention the prime minister by name, Anwar accused Mahathir of monopolising power to the benefit of his children while impoverishing the Malaysian people.

"The world is big enough for everyone's needs but not enough for everyone's greed," the former finance minister said.

He also asserted that local Chinese-language newspapers were "more liberal" than the Malay-language press, where two pro-Anwar editors were recently forced to resign.

"Leaders are afraid the Malays will wake up to the truth," he said. Supporters of Anwar are meanwhile demanding a fuller explanation.

"If Anwar is guilty, he should be charged in court," said one man attending the Bukit Mertajam rally with his two sons.

In a reference to Malaysia's draconian Internal Security Act which provides for detention without trial, he said: "Many people are afraid to talk about the case because of the traditional tight controls."

A 35-year-old ethnic-Chinese engineer in Bukit Mertajam agreed.

"The best thing for them to do is to go to court. Sacking the deputy prime minister affects the image of our country. The government owes us an explanation," he said.

Thousands of Cambodian opposition supporters defy Hun Sen show of force

PHNOM PENH (R) — Supporters of the Cambodian opposition defied an intimidating police presence and an earlier show of force by the ruling party by marching in their thousands through the Cambodian capital Sunday.

Cheered on by bystanders, the opposition marchers paraded past the city's royal palace calling for the downfall of government leader Hun Sen, who they say won the country's July 26 election through fraud and intimidation.

"Long live peace in Cambodia!" the marchers, who included many motorcycle taxi and trishaw drivers, shouted to the applause and waves of watching staff.

"Hello, we're happy!" a bystander called to foreign journalists.

The mood was in marked contrast to that which accompanied earlier parades through the city by more than 10,000 government supporters, most of whom had been brought into the capital from neighbouring provinces in a fleet of hundreds of trucks.

Citizens watched them warily from shuttered shops and street corners and showed no sign of support as they passed.

A group of the opposition marchers carried the flags of the United States, Britain, Australia and the United Nations. Others carried fronds from roadside trees that have become a symbol of their protest. Vendors banded out free fruit to the marchers.

The march swelled as it snaked through the city, numbering well over five thousand as it reached Monivong Boulevard, the main business street, where it was applauded by traders and ethnic Chinese businessmen in neckties.

Hundreds of steel-helmeted riot police armed with assault rifles, electric cattle prods and sticks kept watch on the march, which the city authorities consider illegal.

The marches took the demonstrations in Phnom Penh into a third week and came despite a morning appeal by Chea Sim, the head of the parliament and chief of the ruling party, for both sides to stop protests and negotiate a settlement to the crisis.

There have been violent clashes between the opposition demonstrators on the one side and police and government supporters on the other throughout the past week.

Many of the government supporters who have marched since Friday have carried bamboo clubs and iron bars, while some have been armed with handguns. Sunday they beat at least one man and there were several minor disturbances.

On Saturday at least three people were wounded by gunfire as rival supporters clashed. Earlier that day, opposition leaders Prince Norodom Ranariddh and former finance minister Sam Rainsy said they were calling off a mass rally planned for Sunday and a strike planned for Monday because of fears of violence.

Police fired at opposition protesters early last week and



Cambodian opposition supporters Sunday march through the streets of Phnom Penh. Thousands of protesters defied an intimidating police presence and an earlier show of force by the ruling party by marching through the nation's capital to the applause and cheers of thousands of ordinary citizens lining the route (Reuters photo)

government supporters killed one opposition supporter by firing into a crowd Friday, bringing the confirmed death toll to two.

Many more people have been injured by bullets, clubs and rocks. Human rights workers fear more may have been killed. The protests have been joined by Buddhist monks and students.

The opposition march began just as the bulk of government supporters were trucked out of the capital back home, but one police colonel said they would be back.

"As long as the opposition still hold demonstrations, we'll come back to town," he said. "Next time we come we'll stamp on them."

Ranariddh told reporters Saturday he would hold talks Wednesday with his father King Norodom Sihanouk and later with Chea Sim in an bid to end the crisis.

"It is my duty to end the bloodshed, end the violence, and try to get out from this situation," he said.

Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party won too few seats to form a new administration on its own and the opposition has threatened to boycott parliament and block a new government unless their complaints of election irregularities are addressed.

International observers said the vote was sufficiently free and fair, and the opposition is coming under increasing pressure to reach an agreement on a new government.

Sihanouk warned the opposition leaders Friday that if they did not attend parliament when it opens on Sept. 24, they would lose parliamentary privileges, including immunity.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indonesians mark 1984 killings

JAKARTA (AP) — A prayer service to remember the killings by troops of Muslim protesters in Jakarta in 1984 ended peacefully as security forces remained on alert in the capital, a news report said Sunday. A crowd of Muslim faithful prayed Saturday night at a mosque near the site of the shootings in the poverty-ridden Tanjung Priok port district. The service took place amid renewed calls for an inquiry into the deaths, which some claim were in the hundreds. It was also held as troops and police remained deployed in central Jakarta after days of protests against President B.J. Habibie. Families and friends of the dead, along with pro-democracy and Muslim activists, have demanded an inquiry into the shootings and the role of two senior generals. Witnesses at the time said security forces opened fire at demonstrators during a street march against the arrests of several anti-government Muslim clergy.

Myanmar police at opposition headquarters

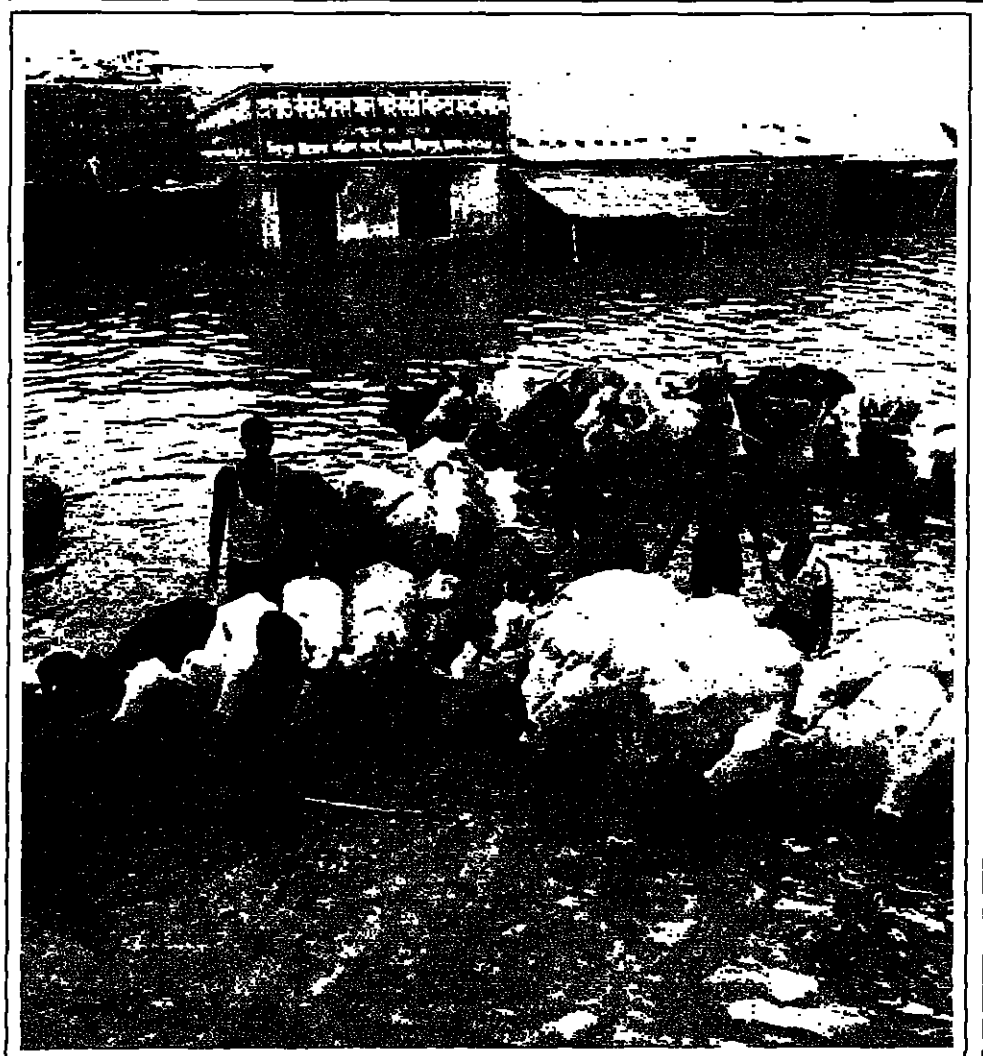
YANGON (AFP) — Dozens of riot police were deployed around the headquarters of Myanmar's leading opposition National League for Democracy Party (NLD) Sunday amid escalating political tensions, witnesses said. At least 200 riot police remained on standby around the Hlaing university campus, where students have been staging anti-government demonstrations over the last two weeks, but no incidents were reported. Diplomats said they were unable to confirm a claim by an exiled student group that 15 junta officers had been arrested for planning to meet NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) said the officers — six colonels and a lieutenant-colonel from the army, three navy majors and five air force colonels — were detained in Yangon on Sept. 5. The ABSDF, in a statement issued in Bangkok, said its information came from junta sources.

Search pressed for Philippines kidnappers

ZAMBOANGA (AFP) — Hundreds of Philippine troops Sunday pressed their hunt for the kidnappers of an Italian priest, a Taiwanese woman and three Hong Kong men, the military said. More than 300 soldiers and policemen searched the southern town of Siraway in an attempt to rescue Father Luciano Benedetti, 52, of Treviso, who was seized in the adjacent town of Sibuco in Zamboanga del Norte province Tuesday. Lieutenant General Angelo Reyes, army chief in the southern island of Mindanao, said go-between had failed to establish contacts with Benedetti's kidnappers because the abductors had been on the move due to the military operations. However Reyes said they were now confined to Siraway because troops had cordoned off the town and a naval blockade was in place if they tried to escape by sea.

Forest fires in Siberia 'catastrophe'

MOSCOW (AFP) — Forest fires in Siberia's Khabarovsk region have destroyed almost million hectares of timber, covering around one million hectares of land, since the start of this year's dry season, the ITAR-TASS news agency said Sunday. An unexpectedly dry August and September intensified the outbreaks of fire that specialists are calling an "ecological catastrophe," said the report based on the estimates of local forest services. At the moment, fires in Russia's Far East are spreading across more than 424 thousand hectares of taiga, the marshy soil forested with pines that covers much of Siberia and Northern Russia, the news agency was told by a forest protection service. More than 550 people are currently at work battling the fires. However, most of their efforts are concentrated around populated areas, while the fires are most fierce in mountainous, remote zones that are difficult to reach. As a result, fires covering up to 35,000 hectares of land are left uncontrolled, rendering firefighting operations virtually ineffective. The region's entire timber industry consumes no more than five million cubic meters of timber a year.



Cattle traders take their herd Sunday through floodwater near Dhaka's Gabtali cattle market. The floods, the longest in the country's history, have submerged three-quarters of Bangladesh, and inflicted massive damage to agriculture, industry and infrastructure since early July. The death toll after more than two months of flooding has risen to 950 people (Reuters photo)

S.Korea leans further towards satellite claim

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea put more faith Sunday in the theory that North Korea might have tried to put a satellite into orbit but failed at the final stage, reports said.

An unnamed "high-level" official here told Yonhap news agency that Seoul and Washington had a consensus that the Stalinist North did try to launch something into space.

"It was a consensus between the United States and South Korea that the last phase of the three-stage rocket lacked the driving force needed to put a satellite in orbit," the official was quoted as saying.

"The last part is believed to have fallen 27 seconds after launch," he said, adding Washington appeared to have tracked the rocket to its second stage and missed observing the third stage.

North Korea said it launched on Aug. 31 a rocket to put a satellite into orbit. But South Korea, the United States and Japan said it was a ballistic medium-range Taepo-Dong 1 missile.

Japan has expressed doubts over North Korea's claim, saying Pyongyang was believed to have used the Aug. 31 launch to shoot a medium-range missile over northern Japan into the Pacific.

The unannounced launch prompted Japan to halt aid to North Korea and suspend limited official and commercial contacts between the two countries, which have no diplomatic ties with each other.

But experts have leaned increasingly toward believing Pyongyang's claim, saying it had converted its ballistic missile to a rocket for satellite launch.

North Korea last week warned South Korea and its allies against slandering its claim that it successfully launched a satellite into space.

Australian leaders unite against Hanson in poll race

SYDNEY (R) — Australian Prime Minister John Howard and Labour leader Kim Beazley clashed Sunday in their only face-to-face battle of the October election campaign, but both pleaded for tolerance and attacked MP Pauline Hanson.

While most of the hour-long, nationally-televised debate focused on economics, the pair said they wanted Australia to march forward into the 21st century with a name for tolerance, unity and racial equality.

"I want an Australian society which is recognised and acclaimed around the world for its tolerance," said Howard.

Beazley said he wanted to restore unity to a divided nation.

"This election campaign has to be about the unity of our people. We've lost our way over the last two-and-a-half years — we've turned against each other rather than to each other," Beazley also said he wanted this collection of former British colonies to sever its remaining constitutional ties with Britain and become a republic by the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

"I would like to see an Australian head of state there opening the games for Australia," Beazley said.

Howard and Beazley are neck-and-neck in opinion polls ahead of the Oct. 3 election and the debate appeared subdued and fairly evenly balanced, with both men dressed in sombre dark grey suits and starting nervously before settling down.

Both denounced Hanson, whose anti-immigration, protectionist One Nation Party has dipped in the polls since Howard called the election two weeks ago.

"We have taken a stand against One Nation from the day they were invented," said Beazley. "One Nation has made a comprehensive botch of itself over the course of the last couple of months and none of us in politics have heard yet a single statement from them that means anything for ordinary bawling Australians."

One Nation's popularity has dipped to about 9 per cent from 13 per cent in July. But most analysts still expect it to win at least two seats in each of the two parliamentary chambers and to play a key role in deciding the winner of other seats.

Beazley warned against writing off One Nation, despite its poll slump and signs that Hanson herself may lose her own parliamentary seat.

"I don't think they are a spent force [although] I'd like to say that," he said.

Most of the debate centred on economics with Howard criticising Labour's record over 13 years in government until 1996 and boasting of his own achievement of steady economic growth and cutting interest rates and inflation.

Beazley attacked Howard's failure to tackle unemployment — stuck above 8 per cent — and warned the government's plan to levy a new value-added tax and hefty personal tax cuts would wreck the economy and destroy jobs.

U.N. rights chief tells Chinese of concern over cleric arrests

SHANGHAI (AP) — U.N. rights chief Mary Robinson told state-run Chinese church groups Sunday about foreign concern over the arrest of independent clerics, but said she believed religious freedom in China was increasing.

After a meeting with leaders of Buddhist, Christian, Daoist and Muslim groups, Robinson said she gave them copies of appeals from Christian charities to the government calling for an end to interference in unofficial churches.

China has closed unauthorised houses of worship and jailed independent clerics, along with Catholic bishops and priests who refuse to renounce allegiance to the Vatican.

Robinson said some of the religious leaders told her they had good relations with unofficial churches and that religious liberties had "improved greatly."

"I think it's important to recognise that there have been improvements in... freedom of religion," said Robinson, who is halfway through a 10-day trip to China — the first ever by a U.N. high commissioner for human rights.

Monday, the former Irish president is to return to Beijing to meet with Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

In Shanghai, Robinson visited a retraining centre for laid-off workers, where she said the curriculum included instruction on legal rights. She said she offered to collaborate on educational programmes.

China responds to human rights complaints by arguing that its first priority is to raise living standards and provide stability.

Calling poverty "an acute denial of many human rights," Robinson noted that during a one-day visit to Tibet last week she saw not only a Buddhist monastery but also irrigation and forestry projects.

"It's important that as high commissioner I note where there is progress made ... and that I have a fair approach," she said.

Robinson said that while in Tibet she was unable to see a dissident monk or find the whereabouts of a boy not seen in public since the Dalai Lama named him a high Buddhist cleric three years ago.

However, she added, "it's not ever a case of getting instant answers. I regard this as the start of a continuing process." Robinson was concerned about monk Yulo Dawa Tsering because he was arrested after speaking to a U.N. human rights team in 1994.

A member of a European Parliament delegation that saw him two years ago said Tsering was "not the master of his own movements." Chinese officials would not disclose the whereabouts of nine-year-old Gendun Choekyi Nyima but said he was with his family, Robinson said.

The boy has not been seen since the May, 1995, announcement that he was the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, the highest-ranking spiritual leader in Tibet since the Dalai Lama fled into exile 40 years ago. Chinese officials forced the Tibetan clergy to choose a replacement.

Robinson also expressed concern about the arrest of a dissident's wife, who was dragged away from her Beijing hotel by police. Chu Hailan, who was held for eight hours, told reporters that police had beaten her.

"I was very concerned that... she suffered directly as a consequence of wishing to see me," Robinson said.

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New era for Russia

THE CONFIRMATION of Yevgeny Primakov as the new Russian prime minister by the Russian Duma on Friday offers hopes for the country to forge national unity that has eluded it since the collapse of the communist order. By endorsing Primakov's appointment with an overwhelming majority, 317 votes against only 63, the Duma, which twice rejected President Boris Yeltsin's previous choice, Viktor Chernomyrdin, is encouraging solidarity in favour of the new prime minister. Dubbed as a compromise candidate, Primakov enjoys the respect and trust of communists who remain in control of the Duma. While committed to continue the reforms already under way in the country, the new premier has called for a "reformed reform" movement in the country that would take into consideration a variety of factors including the obvious need for a greater state role in running the collapsing economy.

With the country's currency plummeting and the economic recession deepening, there is growing evidence that following blindly the notion of free market economy in a nation that has no tradition in private enterprise would prove unsuccessful. Primakov was quick to say, to the satisfaction of the majority of Russians that "the government should intervene in economic affairs and regulate them." He hastened to add, however, that the return to some state control did not signal the return to a regimented state-run economy.

The appointment of Viktor Gerashchenko, an old-hand Soviet banking official, to head the Russian Central Bank is also a clear signal of rising dissatisfaction with wild capitalism that characterised the nation's economy over the past few years. The new thrust in Moscow it seems is to establish a national unity government representing the country's various trends and ideologies. As Yeltsin said after the appointment of Primakov, a major crisis was avoided by compromise between the conflicting political and economic forces.

For the Middle East, the endorsement of Primakov, an expert on the Arab-Israeli conflict, could mean an independent Russian policy on peace-making in the region — certainly a big relief. The peace process has so far suffered many setbacks because of Russia's near abandonment of its role as a co-sponsor of the process together with the U.S. Primakov is therefore expected to pay greater attention to the problem facing the Arab World including Iraq.

The entire new order should gain from the rise of Russia from the ashes of the collapse of the former Soviet order. A strong Russia would add an important element to world and regional security.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh called on the Syrian leadership to reconsider its policy towards Jordan and stop the propaganda campaign which will not turn Jordan into another Lebanon. The writer lashed out at Syria for sending dirty water to Jordan. He said Jordan and Syria are brothers, and it is not in their interests to behave antagonistically toward each other. Good relations are good for both countries, said the writer. The Turkish visit to the region carried a message to the Syrian leadership — Turkey can deal with any country in the Arab World and deal with it without Syria. The Turkish move will make Syria feel isolated in the region, added the writer. Turkey never considered including Jordan in a political coalition, because Ankara understands that Jordan cannot help it in its war with Syria, Iraq or Greece, added Faneh.

Al Dustour, in its editorial, slammed Israel for killing Adel and Imad Awadallah, members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). The Arabic daily said Israel intended to kill the two brothers at this stage in order to kill what is left of the peace process. Israel started a war against the peace process, and what happened is only the beginning of a series of crises in the region, added the paper. The paper added that Israel knew it would enrage all the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and the rest of the occupied territories. The paper ruled out any possibility of the United States exerting pressure on the Israeli hardline prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to bow to the Oslo accords. The paper also called on the Arab countries to send the Oslo file to the United Nations to study it and pressure Israel to succumb to the signed agreements.

Economic review

Making economic policy work

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

EVEN AS Jordan begins to feel the real force and consequence of economic policy, such as the costs of opening trade and the related domestic interventions of the late eighties and early- to mid-nineties, the design and introduction of such policies is carried out with spontaneity and little or no prior design. In fact, policy-makers have become more reactive than pro-active (the latter being the desired state of affairs), a huge shortfall in the age of economic policy reform. What is called for is to institutionalise the function of policy-making through a pro-active economic policy forum.

The making of policy is an involved process, which requires political acumen plus the ability to sell the policy to the public. In other words, even though the design of policy is based on the use of sophisticated tools and voluminous data, the policy output must be a simple statement that is logical and clear to state- and laypersons alike. After all, it is the acceptance of policy by the wider public audience that matters the most, because their acceptance of such policy leads ultimately to their ownership of it (which in and of itself is not a small feat), thereby ensuring commitment and, later, successful implementation.

Consequently, a policy sold is a policy made, and structural adjustment would be speeded up and not only endured, but sought and implemented.

Unfortunately, the reverse is also true. A policy that is made in the hallways of power without the necessary "political marketing" that is required delivers "alien" policies that are tagged as World Bank or IMF-made-for-Jordan frameworks. Such policy can easily be rejected as alien and fought on the basis of national interest or patri-

otism. As a result, the policy is ultimately discarded as it becomes burdensome to its initiators; a tragedy that could usher in one economic disaster after another.

Pro-active economic policy can save Jordan hundreds of millions of dollars. For example, the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC), which in many experts' view should be the flagship of the privatisation drive, is still owned 100% by the government. Today, the discussion still centres on whether a strategic partner should have been chosen or not (even though four years ago US\$10 million were spent to put this issue to rest, and 11 years ago plans had already been made to sell it to the private sector). This issue, had there been a pro-active economic policy approach, would have been fully addressed and resolved by now. What went wrong? Public education had been and continues to be completely ignored. The worries and fears of the general populace should have been allayed by complete disclosure through the proper and institutional use of the media. The delays in selling the 40% share of JTC to a strategic partner have cost the budget several hundred million dollars and the future of the privatisation drive looks dim — the market now is almost saturated with national telecommunications carriers which are in literal competition with each other in a globally turbulent and bearish market.

An other example of the need for a pro-active policy forum, is the status of the Antitrust Law, Jordan's most significant piece of economic legislation yet; it is still not accepted by the public even though the public has consistently complained of price gouging and monopolistic practices that have stifled the development of commerce and investment for several decades. The Law, which is

still to be introduced, continues to face antagonism among industrialists due to their lack of knowledge of its contents and benefits (somehow, their participation was delayed until after the law was drafted as smuggled unofficial copies found their way to the press and their offices). Such attacks on good policies make them bad policies, regardless of how urgently they are needed.

However, no new piece of legislation has suffered as much as the Pension Fund Law. It was leaked to the media a few months ago, long before it was properly introduced or even debugged by the experts who wrote it, thus causing a furore as non-experts jumped the wagon of rent-seeking with vicious attacks on what could have been a perfectly sound law. Policy-makers, caught by surprise did not have a chance to defend it and it was promptly withdrawn until further notice from that Cabinet's agenda.

In an age where the issue of structural adjustment is a matter of making new policies and successfully implementing them, the art of policy-making should not be ignored or relegated to non-specialists as a trivial luxury. Moreover, policy should be made with transparency and public participation. On the 20th of last month, HRH Crown Prince Hassan gathered representatives of the people to discuss issues that spanned not only economic policy, but also the making and the design of peace. This spirit should be replicated at all levels within well-designed frameworks to guarantee that beneficial policies are not shelved because the public was ignored. The time has come for the creation of a pro-active policy forum that properly performs the task of analysis, design and selling of policy; let's not wait too long.

M. KAHIL



LETTERS

Protecting women

To the editor:

THE ARTICLE on women in Afghanistan (JT, September 7), like many others printed recently in the Jordan Times and the world's media, brings to light the plight of the Afghan women at the hands of illiterate trigger-happy bearded Talebans, in a country that has seen and survived mass destruction and loss of millions of lives in the last two decades of "Jihad." That is, during the Muslims' fight for freedom, which received, interestingly, strong moral and great material support from many freedom-loving countries of the West.

Nobody will dispute the right of women, and of all human beings, to protection from exploitation, degradation and disgrace. Women need and must be guaranteed this protection, not only in war-torn Afghanistan, but in all societies, without exceptions.

Isn't it ironic that such protection seems to be very needed for young working women in some of the most decent places of our times — the offices of the state governors, politicians and even presidents? After all, Ms. Lewinsky and Ms. Jones were not living in the wild war world ruled by uncivilised fundamentalist Taleban.

Dr. Masud Ahmad Malik,
 Sweileh.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

The Middle East and King Rehoboam's ghost

A sobering lesson on the abuse of power from the Old Testament still holds true for modern Israel, writes Roy E. Skinner

RELIGION HAS seldom been an easy subject to raise in any political or social environment. A forbidden subject in certain circles, it frequently results in bitter intolerant exchanges causing divisions in society and even families; not only in Northern Ireland.

In the Middle East for half of my professional life, I felt the influence of religion in local and across-border politics and therefore my work. Religious views slanted political discussion, the thrust of many military and terrorist operations and domestic policies affecting human rights.

In the closing hours of the Middle East war in June 1967, a delegation of non-Zionist Ultra-Orthodox Jews (Haredim) came to see me at my bomb-scarred windowless United Nations headquarters in Jerusalem. We met outside the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission, in an area between the now non-recognised armistice demarcation lines running through the city. The rabbi leading the delegation asked me to give a petition to King Hussein. Such was outside my organisation's role.

The document's intent was to call upon Jordan to continue and win the war — to rid the Jewish people in Israel of their illegal and evil government. The rabbi declared that rule by a Muslim king was preferred to a government of Jews who had usurped the role of God. He said the new Israel would be established by their Messiah and not by power.

On my first trips outside the region I was repeatedly told in several Christian settings how privileged I should consider myself in that I had seen first hand the fulfilment of God's will: the taking of all of Palestine for the new Israel. I was told the rabbi had misinterpreted the scriptures.

For the next 30 years I was to experience closely the schizophrenic religious and secular divisions within Israeli society and the confusions of many Christians elsewhere. Few shared my view that in the euphoria of war victory lay the seeds of occupation and moral defeat. Some who did so were Israeli Jews who still work for a non-exclusive national security based on a just peace.

In Jerusalem during some of the following years I saw the non-Zionist Ultra-Orthodox take advantage of the government authorities they had despised. West Jerusalem has become the religious ghetto of Israel. The lawmakers of the municipality have become hostages to demands for the observance of religious law and customs.

The rightist government of Israel has become the schizophrenic hostage to both the non-Zionist and the Zionist Ultra-Orthodox Jewish lobbies, its own propaganda and the ballot box. First to the powerful minority group of Zionist Ultra-Orthodox Jews, mostly armed immigrant settlers on Palestinian land, and their nationalist secular supporters. With and without a belief in a God supporting their claim to land, they believe strongly in the power of their guns and the voting power of a population made fearful for its security. Almost equal first are the demands for the legal implementation of Jewish religious law and custom throughout the land.

Secular Jews, the majority of the Israeli population, see their country divided on such issues and on the identity and existence of Israel itself. Heated debate continues on Jewish identity, and Jewish groups outside Israel ponder their Jewishness.

The exercise of universal morality and the practice of human rights have become repeated casualties in the thrust for nationhood and a one-sided security. The end as seen by many Israeli leaders, albeit representing a minority by number, until the U-

turn of the courageous former and assassinated prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, justified to their satisfaction whatever means were employed to maintain dominance over the displaced and occupied Palestinians.

Power is not authority. Eloquently expressed persuasion from a position of military and economic strength has no moral superiority over the appeal of the oppressed. Whether of Ireland, Germany, Iran or the republics of the former Soviet Union or of Yugoslavia, the scars of history remain vivid.

The Jewish Bible — the Christian Old Testament — contains at least one lesson for all time. It matters little if one has the 12th-century Jewish Moses Maimonides' view of those scriptures (not to be taken completely literally) or the 20th-century Christian Jim Packer's view (the inerrancy of the scriptures is not to be questioned) echoing Vatican II.

The story is recorded of the unwise, incompetent son and successor to King Solomon in the 10th century BC. As told in 1 Kings:12 the new King Rehoboam decided to impose his authority over the whole kingdom of the Israelites. Ignoring the advice of wiser men, he tried to implement with oppression the wishes of his own ego-building supporters. He set the stage for civil war, the weakening and division of his country and its subsequent destruction by outsiders.

Exclusive religion and state never did mix well. Many citizens of John Calvin's 16th-century city-state of Geneva would have agreed. The Jewish Israeli peace activists share much with Muslims and the tolerant Christians of the Middle East (including Israeli Christians). Peace in the Middle East must be based on justice and not religion or on strength of possession or occupation. While the Nazi Holocaust against six million Jews and eight million others must not

be forgotten, it is a dangerous distortion to give it the status of a religious cult.

Many of those who preach with a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other, and many of those who cannot accept the relevance of the ancient Jewish religion in the 20th century, have made the memory of the Holocaust an uncomfortable common rallying point for political recognition, support and action. It dominates in the economic and cultural fields where all else may fail. The world's conscience cannot be held hostage to this atrocious blot made on humanity by the bestiality of others. Such would dishonour even those who died.

The Israeli minister for infrastructure, Ariel Sharon, when defence minister in the 1980s, told me that the Palestinians would never prevail. As the ailing leadership of the Palestinian Authority looks over its shoulders to the growing influence of the militant Hamas movement, Sharon may recall the financial and political encouragement given by his government to the watering of the movement's early roots in Gaza. At the same time, the Israeli leadership, in looking over its shoulders, may sense the stalking of the ghost of King Rehoboam. Recently a retired Israeli brigade commander and peace activist told me that the future for a united Israel was at serious risk from within.

The battered body of the Israel-Palestine peace process lies on the side of the Jericho road. It must not be joined by destroyed hopes and work of peace-seeking Israelis. Both groups of people need recognition and security but not one at the other's expense.

It is late but not too late to work for a binational state based on equal rights.

Roy E. Skinner is an Australian, a former director in the United Nations and author of *Jerusalem to Baghdad 1967-1992* (1995).

— The Canberra Times

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Features

The Madaba project made plain

Ancient Ammonites & Modern Arabs: 5000 years in the Madaba Plains of Jordan
Edited by Gloria A. London and Douglas R. Clark American Centre of Oriental Research (ACOR), Amman, 1997, 72 pp., colour and black and white photos, illustrations, glossary, chronology. JD 14 (\$20).

THIS IMPRESSIVE volume is a quick-and-easy read of just a few hours, but it is also one of the best (and few) examples of how archaeologists can make their research results more easily accessible, understandable, and relevant to the general public. The Madaba Plains project is also an appropriate jumping off point for such an exercise, given the scope and depth of its research and the compelling continuity and parallels that one can trace in the cultures of this region during the past 5000 years or so.

The Madaba Plains is that area north and east of the Dead Sea that stretches from Amman in the north to Madaba and Tell Jalul in the south, comprising a series of excavated archaeological tells as well as several site and hinterland surveys. The Madaba Plains region falls within the wider ancient region of Ammon and northern Moab, bounded on the north by the Zarga River and on the south by the Wadi Mujib.

Important historical developments took place here in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, as urban civilisations developed apace and the tribal confederations of the time started taking on 'national' identities and changing into the forerunners of modern 'nation-states'. The Ammonite and Moabite people from those periods are known from historical sources such as the Bible and Assyrian and Egyptian records, and their material culture is becoming better known thanks to many ongoing archaeological excavations.

This book "explores the relationship between the human and physical environment in all the potential

dimensions of life, culture, and history in the Madaba Plains," according to the introduction. It notes that "at times settlements would intensify in number, but a decline in population would eventually follow," as political and economic realities impacted on the course of human civilisation in this region.

The book focuses heavily on the major and continuing project excavations at Tell Hisban and Tell 'Umayri, south-west of Amman. Other project digs have taken place at Tell Jalul, Tell Jawa, and smaller sites within the Madaba Plains. The wide ranging nature of the project's components aims to document the relationship between the large and small ancient sites, between urbanites and rural folk, and — most interestingly, in my view — between the human values, social relations and material lifestyles of people in antiquity and today. It also examines a variety of sectors, including plant and animal remains, geology, hydrology, and ethnography, and, most importantly, it tries to reconstruct the long ancient cycle of how people in this region adapted to their environment and the changing circumstances of their history. Archaeology is fascinating as a science and a scholarly discipline, but its full worth can only be attained if its practitioners make the link between their digging in the ground and the lives of people today.

This is one of the achievements of this volume, and it deserves careful study by other scholars who may be wondering how their work could receive more acknowledgement or support.

Following the introduction, chapter two reviews the natural environment and how people either protected or neglected their natural assets (neglect and deterioration have tended to be dominant in the last two millennia, resulting in the disappearance of ancient oak forests and their associated deer

and wild pig, for example).

Chapter three is about the people of ancient Ammon and modern Jordan — including a fascinating parallel between tribal settlement policies of the Ottomans last century and the Assyrians some 2500 years ago. A brief review of the successive cultures and civilisations since the Stone Age documented in this area is a capsule history of humankind itself, recounting the transitions from nomadic hunter-gatherers to settled farmers and villagers to urban traders living in walled towns. The ups and downs of the permanent ancient settlements at Tell 'Umayri and Hisban are neatly summarised, from the first one in the Chalcolithic era (around 4500-3000 BC) until the modern village.

Religion is the subject of the next chapter, which the text says has been "a powerful social force" in antiquity as today. Modern Muslim and Christian practices are mentioned, and ancient gods and goddesses are also reviewed. The continuity and change evident in religious practices throughout the millennia are among the fascinating dimensions of archaeology, and this text captures that very nicely and with sensitivity.

The next chapter entitled 'Settlements' reviews the different manner in which people have lived in this region throughout history, including in open villages, walled towns, semi-nomadic camps,

underground caves, open agricultural complexes, large field towers, forts, and other facilities. This is the most fascinating chapter in the book, in my view, for it allows the non-specialist reader to appreciate the meaning of the often confusing remains of stone walls that archaeologists usually dig up. The discussion of some of the smaller sites,

many different means by which people found shelter throughout the millennia.

Seasonal cave dwellings, mobile tents, built stone and mudbrick homes, and other forms of shelter are discussed and explained. This section reveals the variety of ways in which hardy and flexible people have adapted to the environment over time — and still do so today.

The agricultural sector was usually the base of the economy in ancient times, and remains important today in this area, though permanent settlement has largely replaced seasonal nomadism as the dominant lifestyle of the local population. The scholars of the Madaba Plains project have promoted a field of study they call "food systems", which examines all the ways in which people over time have produced, processed, stored, exchanged, prepared, served, and eaten food. Among the captivating dimensions of the issues explored in this chapter are crop diversification, social mecha-

nisms to promote community solidarity, the balance between herding and cultivation, and regional economic integration. It is perpetually fascinating that so many of the issues that were important to ancient societies in this region remain priority issues today — thus highlighting the relevance of studying the past for contemporary Jordanians and Arabs. One of the areas where archaeologists, anthropologists and other scholars can make a greater contribution to their world is to draw lessons from their documentation of ancient cultures

that are relevant to today's challenges.

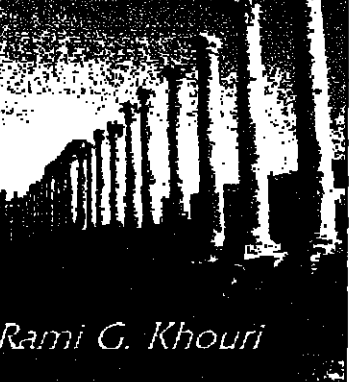
Industry is also discussed as part of the ancient economy, including agriculture-related activities such as spinning and weaving, metallurgy, pottery and jewellery. The description of ancient spinning and weaving is most illuminating, and easily understandable thanks to some fine photos of artefacts and also of contemporary women working in these fields. The photos of ancient metal pieces, including jewellery, are both beautiful to view and very helpful to understanding the human cultural values of the times described.

The economy chapter concludes with a review of how limestone was important for food processing (wine and oil presses), storing water in underground cisterns and large pools, and building houses and other structures.

One of the strengths of this book is its constant focus on human beings and their values and behaviour, as the central actors in the archaeological saga, which is often lacking in many scholarly studies. Chapter 8 reviews the ancient diet and hospitality, which were related in the past as they are today in Arab and Jordanian culture. Writing and ancient scripts are the subject of chapter 9, which is a brief but rich overview of the Ammonite language and its links to other ancient languages.

Social Administration is the subject of chapter 10, which looks at modern government and ancient social status. The review of seal inscriptions and their meaning is especially interesting. The book ends with a chapter on traditional roles of men, women and children, and the modern family in Jordan today.

The conclusion notes that this study looks at the past but "it is also a study of ourselves with an eye to the future." It ends by noting correctly: "The ancient Ammonites,



By Rami G. Khouri

including their neighbours, the Canaanites, Edomites, Moabites, and Assyrians, are the ancestors not only of modern Jordanians, but in many ways of all of us." This linkage between the study of the past and contemporary culture today throughout the world is not sufficiently made by many scholars, but it is explained well in this book. The book ends with a very useful glossary, a chronology of ancient periods, and three pages of suggestions for further reading.

This reasonably priced book makes a fine gift for visitors or family from abroad, and should be particularly useful for students who have no background in archaeology. Though it only has some 60 pages of text and photos, it packs a substantial amount of information into this space and illustrates the text well with photos of ancient remains and contemporary human activities.

Both ACOR and the Madaba Plains Project team are to be congratulated for producing this volume, which allows the general public to share in the facts and the fun of archaeology without having to wade through very technical material. The book clarifies many aspects of the past; it also reminds us that our lives today continue to be defined by values, constraints, and opportunities that have been constant features of our physical and human landscape for thousands of years.

The book is available from ACOR in Amman.



The area of the Madaba Plains Project fieldwork

such as Ruqin Salim agricultural estate and Al-Drayjat fort, is especially satisfying, for these secondary sites often get lost among the larger towns and tells of ancient Jordan. Well chosen and high quality photos and drawings make these issues easily understandable, which is why this book transcends the Madaba Plains focus on ancient Ammonites and modern Arabs, and can be used as an excellent introduction to archaeology as a whole.

'Architecture' is the title of the next chapter, which reviews the

Americans use 'inappropriate' English

By Mark Egan Reuters

ERIK WENSBURG dreams of a day when Americans will say what they really think rather than spewing out amorphous buzz words that have become so pervasive even President Bill Clinton uses words that are "not appropriate." "The urge to imitate what other people say instead of saying with a little

thought whatever you actually mean is terrifically strong," language expert Wensberg told Reuters in an interview, adding with a chuckle: "It's possible at times to feel there is a current vocabulary of about 17 words. We don't seem to be afraid to bore each other." He should know, having spent every spare hour in the last few years toiling over the first revision of Wilson Follett's classic reference book

"Modern American Usage — A Guide." Among the most visible offenders recently, Wensberg said, was Clinton, who told the nation in a televised address in August that he had had a relationship with onetime White House intern Monica Lewinsky that was "not appropriate." "It seemed to me that, since he was willing to call the relationship 'wrong,' which he did in the next breath, he need not have

gone to the bother by using that fancy phrase 'not appropriate,' which implies a clinical distance that doesn't suit the case," Wensberg said. "He was, after all, talking about himself." Others also have bristled at Clinton's usage, saying "not appropriate" should be reserved for such things as garish attire, not sex with a White House intern in her early 20s.

But Wensberg adds another thought: Strictly speaking, the only people who should be referring to a relationship in these terms is a therapist practising the fine art of psycho babble. "There's no one in the country who doesn't have an opinion about the (Clinton/Lewinsky) relationship now and couldn't call it by plainer words," he said.

Much has changed since "Modern American Usage" came out in 1966, and now more than ever Americans seem to have trouble figuring out what to call each other without offending anyone.

What should we call the poor? The poor themselves know who they are but politicians and the press hardly know what to call them," Wensberg said of the conundrum.

"They were once called the 'underprivileged' but the trouble with this is that it implies they were privileged but just less so than other people. Then they became 'the disadvantaged,' which raised the same difficulty. Most recently they were called the 'underclass,' which made some people uncomfortable because it sounds awfully permanent," he said.

So what should we call them? Wensberg suggested we call them like they are — the poor.

The use of euphemisms — words which Wensberg says "ease a difficult situation, or a situation difficult to explain or not worth explaining" — is definitely on the rise.

Americans are at their wit's end trying to figure out what to call their romantic interest, he said. "My companion" has been tried out and "my partner" has been tried out. "My significant other" has been tried out and people began to laugh. Now one hears a great deal of "my friend," which leaves no one any the wiser. "As always in America, the issue of what to call the various ethnic and racial groups is still a tender spot.

"How does one choose

among Negro, black, African American and Afro-American? It can be rather difficult and a number of excellent black writers declined to be called Afro-American or African American because they think these terms scant the history of blacks from the West Indies or simply an African allegiance that they don't feel," Wensberg said.

One change since the book was first published is the remarkably quick shift in replacing "Oriental," which was widely used just 15 years ago, to the now common "Asian." Why was this? "Oriental, because it comes from the Latin word for east, was geocentric with the West," Wensberg said.

"Whom are Orientals east of? The name seemed to derive from where inhabitants of the United States stood and that didn't go down well with a great deal of Asians." If Wensberg had to pick just one abuse of language, his desert island peeve, it would be what he sees as the computer industry's kidnapping and desecration of the word "icon." An "icon," Wensberg noted, is a painting, sculpture or carving of a religious personage — not something that can be found sprinkled about on a computer monitor.

"Computer engineers, as they cobbled together computer language, abducted the word to refer to little drawings that signify computer options. Somehow then it became open-season on the word." On this topic, more than any other, Wensberg became wound up and offered the following as some of the "inappropriate" uses of the word "icon": he has seen recently in the press: "Old Coca-Cola bottles, bean-bag chairs, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, women in general, plastic bowling pins, the Coney Island boardwalk, wooden water tanks, plastic picture frames, a skyscraper, lamps, a civil-rights leader, a clothing store, Wagner, paper cups, movie actors, artificial Christmas trees, a radio commentator, a politician, a painter, the British theatre, a magazine rack, a nun, a singer, an office chair, a composer, pop-corn and the Monroe Doctrine — that's a partial list," he said, sounding like he could continue.

Which made a reporter feel slightly guilty for double-clicking on an "icon" to start writing this story.

Post-Beijing strategies for change

BOOK REVIEW

Muslim Women and the Politics of Participation: Implementing the Beijing Platform, edited by Mahnaz Afkhami and Erika Friedl
New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997, 198 pages \$19.95

ACCORDING TO the editors of this book, The U.N.'s 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, was a "threshold in women's struggles for women's rights; 189 national governments signed a document that explicitly states that women's rights are human rights and that all issues are women's issues" (p. ix). The point now is to go far-ther across this threshold towards implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, but "nowhere is this more difficult than in Muslim countries where religious authorities, anti-Western and

anti-modernist sentiments, Islamist agendas, and weak economies form very strong barriers to women's realisation of their rights" (p. xiii). This judgement should not be construed to mean that Afkhami and Friedl are anti-Islam. Rather their focus is on the interaction between power relations and social attitudes and practices which are often justified by religion: "Those whom customs privilege will seek to legitimise them by linking them firmly to theology or religiously inspired law" (p. xiv). In fact, the book includes essays from devout Muslims as well as secular feminists. While some of the authors evaluate the realisation of women's rights in the context of state policies, structural adjustment, globalisation and privatisation, others seek a radical reinterpretation of the Quran which would stipulate total equality between men and women. What is perhaps common to all the essays is emphasis on the importance of education.

Part 1 of Muslim Women and the Politics of Participation analyses the impact of the Beijing Conference in countries such as Algeria, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Part 2, entitled "Strategies for Change,"

is arguably the most interesting and diverse section of the book. Azar Nafisi writes about the power of imagination to shape reality, taking as an example Shahrzad's story-telling in One Thousand and One Nights, which not only saved her life, but led to more humane governance in the kingdom where she lived. On a more contemporary note, Eileen Kuttab explains the Women Studies Programme at Birzeit University, Palestine, which combines teaching, research, with community outreach and gender intervention. Other essays discuss personal status codes, developing women's leadership skills, and the need for revitalising the Beirut-based Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World. Also included is a sample from a new manual for women's human rights education in Muslim societies. In another, highly original essay, Nimat Hafez Barazangi writes about Islamic higher learning for women. This involves "seeing Islam in its simplest, most direct form," since "deeper knowledge of the Islamic primary sources beyond the ritual religious acts, is the basis for Muslim women to effect a change" in their status (p. 43-44).

Part 3 of the book provides information about the international organisations and national machinery in various countries which can or do play a role in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. These range from UNIFEM to the World Bank, including positive mention of Jordan's Strategy for the Advancement of Women.

All in all, this book stands out among recent anthologies on women due to its practical orientation. Most of the contributors are activists as well as scholars. Though they are obviously well-versed in the various theories about why women are oppressed, their focus here is forward-thinking and action-oriented: What can be done to promote change in women's situation in a way that will further the development of society as a whole?

By Sally Bland

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Labour study finds participation of women to be mostly in voluntary work, public sector jobs

A NEW study has revealed that the rate of women's participation in the labour market is 23 per cent, less than expected compared to the percentage of women to the total population and in light of efforts exerted to increase their participation in the labour market.

The study, conducted by the Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre and the Public Administration Institute, showed that the involvement of women, who hold the general secondary certificate or the diploma certificate, at the low administrative level is higher than the women who hold baccalaureate, masters or doctorate degrees. In this context, the rate was found to be 3:1 compared to 3:2 when both men and women are taken into consideration for the some educational and employment levels.

As to the various work areas, women's participation was found to be highest in the voluntary sector at 39.3 per cent, followed by 35.7 per cent in the public sector and 10 per cent in the private sector. In high administrative posts, only one woman was found to be involved out of 1,000 of the total employees covered in the study. The highest rate was evident in the voluntary work and the lowest was in the public sector.

According to the study, there were only 10 women in leading posts at the institutions covered by the study. Two were working in the public sector, three in the voluntary social sector and five in the private sector where four of whom were running businesses that were owned by themselves or their families. Furthermore, the study pointed out that

the benefits of investment in education did not reflect on the participation of women in high administrative jobs or leading posts. In this context, 17.1 per cent of the women had educational qualification after the baccalaureate degree and only 6.4 per cent per cent of those were working.

Asked about the reasons that hinder the advancement of women in various types of jobs, decision-makers as well as women themselves specified irregular working periods and the lack of enough interest by the working women themselves in professional and educational development. Another reason was cited to be the negative perception of male bosses to the work of women.

An analysis of why working women lack continuity in their jobs showed family concerns, marriage, pursuing education and seeking better work opportunities as the main factors. As such, the study recommended training and rehabilitation programmes to boost the women's administrative capabilities.

The area where the women were found to have little participation were finance, economy, technical and legislative fields in addition to consultations, media, and diplomatic corps.

The study covered 118 Jordanian institutions of which 59 were from the public sector, 34 private and 25 non-governmental voluntary sector. The number of employees at those establishments totalled 188,249 persons who represent 55 per cent of the total workforce at the three sectors. The percentage of women in the sample study was 29.7 per cent (Al Ra'i).

Saudi banks struggling with falling oil prices — Moody's

DUBAI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia's banks could start experiencing asset quality problems if oil prices remain low, the U.S. credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service said in a report.

No rating actions are anticipated "for the time being" but "some might occur" if oil prices were to continue at present level well into 1999, it added in its Banking System Outlook for Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter.

"The financial strength of the Saudi banking system is being threatened by low oil prices, and if they remain at such level, banks could start experiencing asset quality problems later this year or in early 1999," it said.

"Lower business volumes are already affecting banks, as the government cancels major projects and the private sector responds by taking a cautious approach to new investment," it added.

The long term foreign currency deposits of the 11 Saudi banks are rated Baa3 by the agency which expects that "for the time being, the authorities would intervene to avoid any bank defaulting on its obligations, for both political reasons and to maintain their international reputation."

On the other hand, Moody's said it identified three banks "which have reasonable" chances of receiving a higher financial strength rating over the medium term: Saudi Hollandi Bank, National Commercial Bank and Riyadh Bank.

The current financial strength rating for the three banks is respectively D plus, D plus and D.

"However, it is difficult to envisage such actions being taken unless there are improvements in the prospects for oil prices or the economy," said Moody's.

The agency expects a 25 per cent decline in oil prices to translate into a loss of earnings in the region of 17.5 per cent for the Saudi government, as oil income accounts for some 70 per cent of the Saudi budgetary revenue.

Jordan to go ahead with U.S. firm to establish large bromine project

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The government will proceed with its agreement with an American firm to establish the largest factory in the Kingdom to produce bromine despite Israeli protests, Information Minister Nasser Judeh said Sunday.

Judeh, who was speaking at a weekly press briefing, told reporters that the agreement between the Jordan Potash Company and its subsidiary the Dead Sea Industries Company and the

Virginia-based the

Albemarle company, concluded on May 19, had the blessing of the government. "The [agreement] is in line with the Investment Encouragement Law which aimed at bringing direct investments to the country," the minister said. "The new venture will create hundreds of job opportunities in Jordan."

Judeh said the agreement followed extensive talks with three foreign firms, including one Israeli company. He added that the government decided to end

its talks with the Israeli

firm. "The negotiations with the Israeli firms ended long ago," Judeh said, adding that there were enough reasons to end the talks, some of them "political."

According to the \$120 million deal, Albemarle will finance 40 per cent of the project, and the rest of the capital will be raised through foreign loans.

The American firm will provide engineering technical, nology in addition to marketing and manufacturing expertise needed in the pro-

ject.

The factory, which is expected to start its activities by the year 2001, is to produce 50,000 tonnes of bromine and 35,000 tonnes of calcium bromide annually.

Arab Potash Company predicts that the venture will earn an annual income of \$120 million.

Bromine is widely used for polymers, pharmaceuticals, photographic chemicals, water treatment and petroleum products.

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 13/09/1998

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADING	VALUE TRADED '000	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	18.4	.89	11	170	38243	225.00	224.75	-.25
2.100	1.420	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.4	4.24	3	975	1608	1.65	1.55	-.10
3.200	1.030	BANK OF JORDAN	2	0.00	2	1475	1562	1.06	1.06	0.00
1.300	.870	MID. EAST INV. BK.	63.1	0.00	1	500	480	.97	.96	-.01
2.680	1.550	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	11.1	6.56	2	750	1285	1.58	1.58	0.00
6.510	2.610	THE HOUSING BK.	19.2	3.30	13	7282	21972	3.05	3.05	0.00
3.450	1.760	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	.8	0.00	1	250	448	1.79	1.79	0.00
3.910	1.690	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.8	0.00	2	3080	5324	1.75	1.74	-.01
3.300	1.350	JOR. INV. FUND BANK	22.9	3.36	2	10492	15399	1.48	1.49	.01
.930	.600	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	2	0.00	50	78407	56210	.70	.72	.02
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 295.00 %CHG: -0.17										
2.850	1.740	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	7.5	9.26	3	2200	5945	2.70	2.70	0.00
2.350	1.800	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	9.5	0.00	1	100	198	1.95	1.98	.03
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 127.48 %CHG: +0.16										
2.240	1.470	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.6	5.57	20	10516	15563	1.48	1.48	0.00
1.480	.740	NATL. PORTFOLIO	31.5	0.00	16	17350	13583	.78	.79	.01
1.120	.680	REAL ESTATE INV.	14.3	0.00	1	3000	2190	.73	.73	0.00
.590	.280	JORDAN INTL. SECUR.	10.3	8.42	6	190	2005	10.52	10.56	.04
4.600	1.880	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.7	2.04	7	7000	13720	1.97	1.96	-.01
1.050	.890	SARMA EDUCATION	20.5	0.00	3	1500	1340	.89	.89	0.00
1.830	1.060	UNIFIED CO.	5.3	9.24	30	13050	13343	1.14	1.19	.05
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 108.79 %CHG: +0.05										
1.160	1.000	ATTACHEE	9	0.00	1	1000	1200	1.10	1.10	0.00
3.900	1.840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.6	5.61	3	1300	2548	1.96	1.96	0.00
4.110	1.400	JOR. PROSPERITY MINES	16.9	0.00	1	100	160	1.60	1.60	0.00
6.500	4.070	ARAB POTASH CO.	16.7	5.00	5	20000	80490	4.10	4.00	-.10
1.250	.980	JOR. PETROL. RESERVARY	10.3	8.42	6	190	2005	10.52	10.56	.04
1.680	1.060	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	67.9	0.00	4	879	1009	1.15	1.15	0.00
5.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	7.4	2.79	28	28396	76237	2.67	2.69	.02
5.590	1.200	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	5.0	8.70	5	2500	2890	1.14	1.15	.01
1.420	.660	RAFA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	1	900	570	.63	.60	-.03
6.350	4.700	DAR ALDINA DV. INV.	6.8	6.22	6	4330	24449	5.64	5.63	-.01
.570	.390	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	14.2	0.00	12	18500	7760	.42	.42	0.00
1.030	.670	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	24.4	0.00	2	5500	4400	.81	.80	-.01
1.420	.330	NATIONAL IND.	9	0.00	1	500	225	.43	.45	.02
.590	.300	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	27	35850	12906	.35	.35	0.00
.680	.370	JOR. ROCKWELL TRD.	9	0.00	2	400	148	.37	.37	0.00
1.740	.760	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	8.8	9.30	2	200	172	.83	.86	.03
2.300	.700	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MANF.	34.7	0.00	6	3750	2775	.72	.74	.02
.730	.380	JOR. SOLVED CHEM.	8.1	0.00	42	75400	32250	.41	.43	.02
1.290	.530	UNIV. HIGH. IND.	11.0	8.70	20	20200	13902	.66	.69	.03
.930	.800	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	9	0.00	8	4950	2624	.53	.53	0.00
1.080	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	9.5	14.93	19	25750	17094	.65	.67	.02
1.580	1.150	EL. & EAY READY WEAR	42.6	0.00	1	150	182	1.20	1.21	.01
1.310	.910	UNIV. TOBACCO	6.5	6.27	5	2400	2222	.92	.93	.01
1.120	.660	UNION CH. & VEG.	11.3	0.00	2	1100	1122	1.05	1.02	-.03
.890	.660	JORDAN STEEL	9.8	7.95	17	21050	18097	.85	.88	.03
.710	.580	NAT. ALUMINUM	35.2	0.00	75	123970	87984	.69	.71	.02
.670	.530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	10.3	0.00	3	3000	2710	.96	.99	.03
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 80.21 %CHG: -0.77										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 177.39 %CHG: -0.29										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 13/09/1998										
N 1.050	.880	EXPORT & FTH. BKK. 75%	16.3	0.00	1	2000	1260	.89	.88	-.01
.490	.270	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	100	37	.39	.37	-.02
.800	.500	UNION INV.	9	0.00	31	64900	34452	.53	.54	.01
.620	.240	ARAB FTH. INVEST.	9	0.00	6	10000	2600	.26	.26	0.00
N .260	.090	JOR. IND. MATCH-JERICO	9	0.00	3	1250	1313	1.00	1.05	.05
N .260	.090	ARAB FOOD & WED.	9	0.00	7	21500	2325	.10	.11	.01
N .260	.090	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	8.8	9.30	2	200	172	.83	.86	.03
N .260	.090	NATL. MULT. RES. MANICO	9	0.00	23	33745	9786	.29	.29	0.00
N .260	.090	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	12.6	6.35	6	2850	5248	1.90	1.97	.07
N .260	.090	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	8.8	9.30	2	200	172	.83	.86	.03
N .260	.090	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	11	10500	5775	.55	.52	-.03
N .260	.090	PEARL SAN. P. CONV.	2	0.00	1	250	85	.36	.34	-.02
N .260	.090	HTL. POLYTR.	0.00	0.00	4	12540	6259	.51	.50	-.01
N .260	.090	OPTICALS HEARING CO.	9	0.00	4	4925	1839	.37	.38	.01
N 1.000	.690	AL-SERIAL PRINTING CO	10.7	10.82	6	2650	1855	.70	.70	0.00
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 115 182786 76609										

↑ : New 12 months high
↓ : New 12 months low
S : Stock dividend during the past 12 months
P : Listed during the past 12 months
F : P/E ratio is 100 or more
E : Negative P/E
N : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

IDB sets up \$1.5 billion fund for infrastructure projects

RIYADH (AFP) — Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has set up a \$1.5 billion fund to finance infrastructure projects in member states, a statement released by the bank said.

The fund's aim is to "draw on the capital markets resources to cover the needs of member countries' infrastructure projects, especially energy, telecommunications and transport," the bank said after a meeting of the board in the Red Sea port of Jeddah.

IDB also gave grants totalling more than \$210 million to development projects in Muslim states and Muslim communities, the statement said.

Grants include \$29 million to Oman to expand a power station, \$19 million to Indonesia for irrigation and \$218,000 of scholarships for Sudanese students to study abroad.

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der their control, as great difficulties." rty finance minister rich industrialized ies are meeting in on Monday to dis- Russia's problems and out what can be done and elsewhere.

he observers expect ivers to float the idea d which could be de- d to help counme- at speculative attad- unveiled at the annu- conference in Octobe-

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50 DAYS

T AUGUST 1, a transat- expedition from the home- Rover reeled off leg- ally designed and high- active Land Rover. The ers, the Fifty 50 Chal- began the first of four s- legs from the favor, pe- blish. The team make- O volunteers all from- ese walks of life with a- er Group has been at- uths prior to the expe- uring what will be a me- h 20,000 mile journey at the U.K. and finish- in Africa.

he fifty 50 Challenge is the combined aim of the King Land Rover. It is a 50-day, 50,000-mile journey, showing what a Land Rover

U.S. Open

Davenport wins U.S. Open title on mother's birthday

NEW YORK (AP) — Mom always was there, driving Lindsay Davenport to tennis lessons and providing emotional support, even when others scoffed at her daughter's ability.

hand winners down the lines and won 12 of the last 15 points in a 6-3, 7-5 victory over defending champion Martina Hingis.

Davenport, the first American-born women's

now," Davenport said as she accepted the check, breaking into a laugh as she looked at her mom in the players' box. After hitting a backhand volley winner on match point, the champion put her hands

when I started playing tennis," Davenport said. "I think I've had three or four people in my career that have stuck with me the whole time and believed in me since Day 1."

A few hours after Davenport defeated the world's top women's player, the men's No. 1 lost as well. Four-time champion Pete Sampras, hobbled by a strained left quadriceps, was ousted 6-7 (8-10), 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 by defending champion Patrick Rafter in the semifinals.

Sampras, aiming for a record-tying 12th Grand Slam singles title, was hurt late in the third set and played the rest of the three-hour match with bandages around his leg.

The third-seeded Rafter will face unseeded Mark Philippoussis in an all-Australian final Sunday. Philippoussis had 21 aces in a 6-1, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 victory over No. 10 Carlos Moya.

Philippoussis won 85 percent of his first-serve points, hitting some serves at 210 kph. His second serves were as fast as 193 kph.

Davenport is not the fastest player on the women's tour. Though she's extremely powerful, she's not as athletic as players such as Venus Williams, whom she defeated in the semifinals. And she's never been surrounded by the hype attached to some of her peers.

Though she said capturing the U.S. Open always was her biggest goal, Davenport said winning a Grand Slam title was not essential to make her life complete.

"I always said that if I never won one, I'd still be a great person and I'd still like myself and I'd still keep on playing tennis," she said. "I feel like it's a great, great script."

And I think not a lot of people ever picked me to win a Grand Slam."

Davenport is the first American-born woman to win the singles championship since Chris Evert won the last of her six titles in 1982. Martina Navratilova, a native of Czechoslovakia, won the title as a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1983-84 and 1986-87.

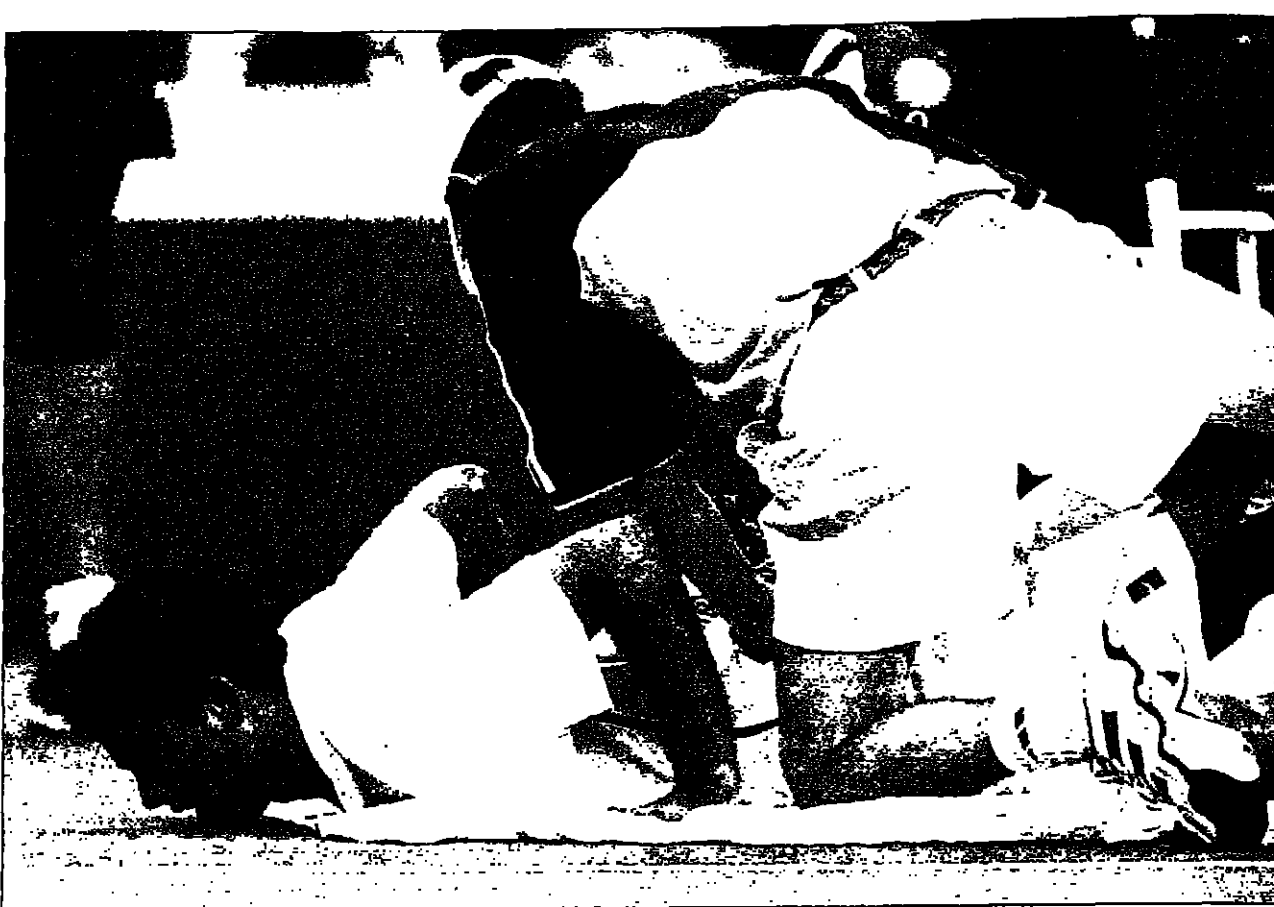
Hingis, 17, who kept her No. 1 world ranking despite the loss, was trying to become the youngest woman to retain a U.S.

Open title. She had won her previous three Grand Slam finals.

This is the first year since 1990 that four different women have won the Grand Slam singles titles — Hingis won the Australian Open, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario won the French Open and Jana Novotna won at Wimbledon.

On a sun-drenched day, Davenport got an early service break for a 2-1 lead in the first set by dictating play with sharp volleys and passing shots. Hingis was handcuffed by the wildness that bothered her throughout the tournament.

Sampras suffered muscle pull, failed to reach the title match



Number one seeded Pete Sampras of the U.S. is rubbed down by his trainer during his semi-final match against number three seeded Patrick Rafter of Australia Saturday at the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, New York. Rafter defeated Sampras 6-7 (8/10), 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3. (AFP photo)



Number three seeded Patrick Rafter of Australia fires a backhand to number one seeded Pete Sampras of the U.S. during the semi-finals Saturday at the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, New York. Rafter won 6-7 (8/10), 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 (AFP photo)



Lindsay Davenport of the U.S. kisses the trophy after her victory over top seed and defending champion Martina Hingis of Switzerland Saturday in the final of the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows. Davenport won 6-3, 7-5 (AFP photo)

And Ann Davenport was there Saturday, celebrating her birthday, when Lindsay won the U.S. Open.

Playing in her first Grand Slam final, Davenport smashed forehand and back-

champion at the U.S. Open since 1982, did not lose a set in the seven rounds of the tournament, worth a \$700,000 first prize.

"I guess she thinks she's getting a really nice gift

on her head in disbelief, then looked lovingly at her racket before smiling at her mom.

"It's just a great story. She's the one that used to drive me hours and hours and hours to go practice, since I was 6



Mark Philippoussis of Australia celebrates his win over number ten seeded Carlos Moya of Spain Saturday at the U.S. Open in Flushing Meadows, New York. Philippoussis won 6-1, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4. (AFP photo)

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U.S. Open at a glance

NEW YORK (AP) — Highlights of Saturday's play in the \$14 million U.S. Open tennis championships:

Weather: Sunny and warm, turning cloudy later in the day, with a high of 87.

Attendance: 21,829.

Results: Lindsay Davenport won the women's singles championship, beating defending champion Martina Hingis 6-3, 7-5. It was Davenport's first Grand Slam singles title. Mark Philippoussis topped French Open champion Carlos Moya 6-1, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 to advance to his first Grand Slam final.

He will face defending champion Patrick Rafter in the first all-Australian men's final since 1970. Rafter beat four-time champion Pete Sampras 6-7 (8-10), 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3, ending Sampras' bid for a record-tying 12 Grand Slam men's singles titles. In juniors doubles, Americans K.J. Hippensteel and David Martin took the boys' title while Kim Clijsters of Belgium and Eva Dyrberg of Denmark won the girls'.

State of the Day: Of the combined 16 Grand Slam single finals berths this year, only Martina Hingis, the

Australian Open champion and U.S. Open runner-up, appeared more than once.

Quote of the Day: "You never know what your response or your reaction's going to be. You can't put into words how much it means, playing for so many

years and being a pro for so many years, and this being the goal always. It seriously was the greatest feeling you can experience being a professional athlete."

Lindsay Davenport, on winning her first Grand Slam singles title.

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Sports

Under-16 basketball tourney resumes

By Roufan Nahhas

AMMAN — The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) announced the new schedule for the final round of the Under 16 Basketball Championship which was postponed for technical reasons, according to JBF.

Irbid's Ibbin will face Amman's Al Ahli Monday in the first qualifying games of the event at Al Hassan Sports City.

Six basketball teams qualified for the championship finals. The event will run until Sept. 17.

The top four teams Jazireh, Wihdat, Ahli and Orthodoxi and two teams from Irbid, Hussein and Ibbin, will be competing for the title.

Al Jazireh qualified after beating Al Ahli 78-42 and Al Orthodoxi after winning his game against

Al Wihdat 92-55.

Al Hussein qualified by overcoming Ibbin 71-21. Last year's runner-up Al Jazireh ended the first round with an unbeaten record after they scored a 52-49 win over title holders Al Orthodoxi.

The competition grouped seven teams from Amman in Group A and

five teams from Irbid in Group B.

The top four in the Amman group qualified for the final round leaving behind Raya, Abu Nusair and Al Jeel, while two teams qualified from the Irbid group leaving behind Gazzet Hashem, Ashrafieh and Samma.

Schedule of matches

Ibbin vs Al Ahli	Sept. 14	6.00pm
Al Hassan Sports City		
Jazireh vs Wihdat	Sept. 15	6.30 Pm
Sports Palace		
Hussein vs Wihdat	Sept. 17	5.00 Pm
Sports Palace		
Jazireh vs Orthodoxi	Sept. 17	7.00 Pm
Sports Palace		

Bierhoff scores twice to lead Milan past Bologna

ROME (AP) — Oliver Bierhoff is right where he was in May: leading Serie A in scoring.

The German striker opened the new Italian League season with a goal on either side of halftime Saturday night to lift his new club, a rebuilt A.C. Milan, past Bologna 3-0. Bierhoff, whose 27 goals for Udinese in 1997-98 were the most in Italy in 37 years, was one of five new starters acquired by Milan over the summer.

While Milan looked capable of emerging from its two-year slump, A.C. Parma did not look like a club set to challenge for the title, settling for a 0-0 draw against visiting Vicenza.

Elsewhere Saturday, AS Roma needed an opponent's expulsion and two second-half headers from Brazilian striker Paulo Sergio to rally for a 3-1 victory

over promoted Salernitana. Fiorentina beat regional rival Empoli 2-0, and Udinese and Sampdoria of Genoa drew 2-2. Nine of Saturday's 13 goals were scored by foreigners.

The five games were pushed up one day to give extra rest and preparation to clubs making their UEFA Cup debuts Tuesday.

Sunday's games see two-time defending titlist Juventus of Turin at Perugia, Ronaldo's Internazionale of Milan at Perugia, Piacenza vs. Lazio of Rome, and Bari vs. Venezia.

At Milan, coach Alberto Zaccheroni — who came over from Udinese along with Bierhoff and Danish midfielder Thomas Helveg — had a successful San Siro Stadium debut, though his club had to weather some good early scoring chances for

Bologna.

Bierhoff opened the tally in first-half injury time, heading in French winger Ibrahim Ba's cross from the right flank, and made it 2-0 in the 51st minute with a penalty kick. Bierhoff earned the penalty when he was hauled down by defender Alessandro Rinaldo.

Brazil's Leonardo iced the match with a nice goal with nine minutes left to play.

Commonwealth Games

Australians break relay world record in pool title sweep; Malaysia wins tenpin title

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — Australia set a relay world record and swept all five golds in the pool at the Commonwealth Games Sunday.

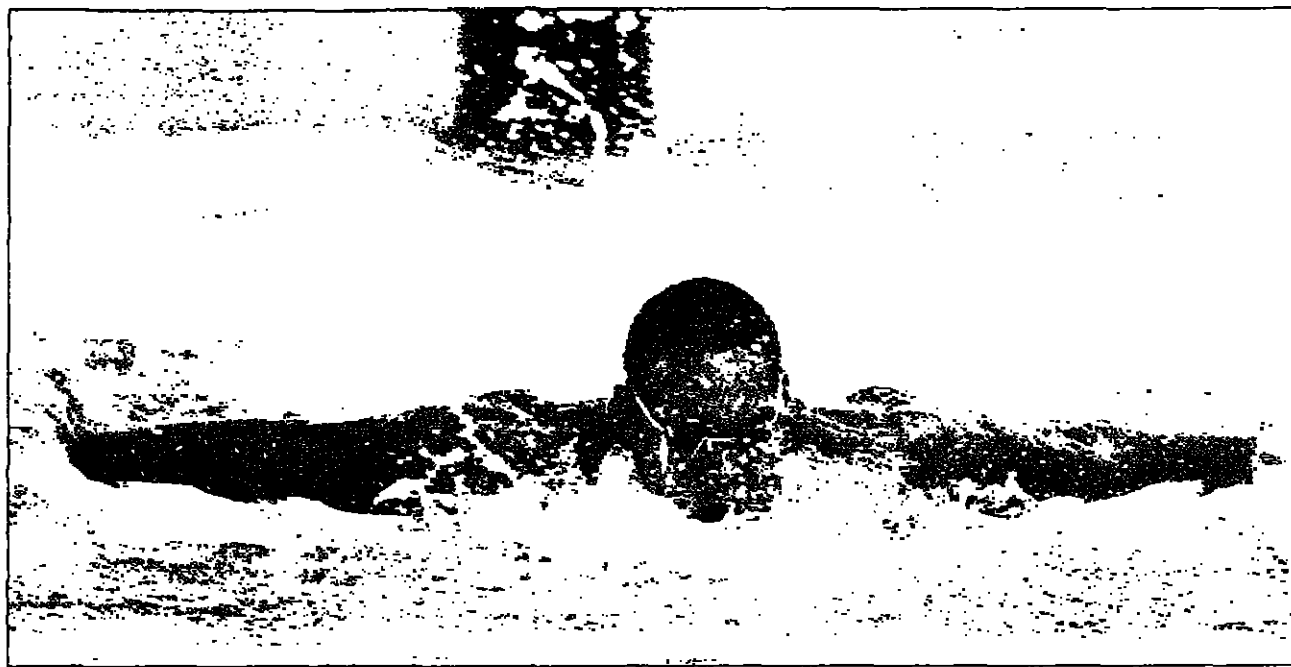
The quartet of Ian Thorpe, Daniel Kowalski, Matt Dunn and Michael Klim, recorded seven minutes, 11.86 seconds in the 4x200 freestyle relay to beat the record of 7:11.95 set by the Unified Team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Second place England was almost 12 seconds behind as the Australians confirmed their domination in the pool in the most emphatic way after victories in Sunday's four other swimming events.

The parade of gold medals at the National Aquatic Centre took Australia's total to 13, with England the closest challenger on four, while host Malaysia won the first Commonwealth Games tenpin bowling title Sunday for its first of the Games.

Geoff Huegill began the five-star Australian performance in 100-meter butterfly sweep ahead of Andrew Pine and world record holder Michael Klim in 51.81, a Games record.

Susie O'Neill won her sixth Commonwealth gold medal by overpowering England's Karen Pickering in the 200 freestyle in 2:00.24 and Trent Steed held off a late charge by England's James Hickman to win the 400-meter individual medley for another



Australian swimmer Geoffrey Huegill powers his way to a new meet record in the 100M men's butterfly Sunday at the XVI Commonwealth Games at the National Aquatic Centre in Kuala Lumpur (AFP photo)

Aussie triumph.

Former world record holder Samantha Riley cruised to an easy victory in the 200 breaststroke, leaving two Canadians behind in silver and bronze, and then came the best of all, the relay world record.

Although Thorpe, who Saturday missed the 9-year-old world 200 freestyle mark by .01, was well outside this time on the opening leg, the quartet stayed well inside the relay record throughout the swim.

Outside of the pool, host Malaysia won the first Commonwealth men's tenpin bowling title while its women took silver in

the women's double event.

With Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in the crowd, the men's doubles pairing of Kenny Ang and Ben Heng overwhelmed their opponents to win the title by a huge 223 pins with Bermuda's Conrad Lister and Antoine Jones second and Australia's Francis Ryan and Michael Muir third.

Maxine Nable and Cara Honeychurch won the women's event for Australia ahead of Malaysia's Lai Kin Ngoh and Shalin Zulkifli with England's Gemma Burden and Pauline Buck.

Tenpin bowling was one of six new sports added to the schedule for these

Games.

In the women's 92 kilometer road race, Canada's Lyne Besette pounced on a blunder by Australian cyclist Anna Wilson with the finish line in sight to burst through and win the gold.

A half length ahead of Besette and New Zealand's Susy Pryde with 400 metres to go, Wilson had the lead in the 92-kilometre road race around rainy Kuala Lumpur when her left foot slipped out of the pedal as she prepared to charge to the line.

The Australian lost speed and momentum and Besette saw her chance. The Canadian hit the front, closely followed by the

Kiwi and Besette crossed the line a cycle length ahead of Pryde for the gold medal with the Australian two lengths back third.

All three riders were given 2 hours 24 minutes 59 seconds with Louise Jones of Wales a distant fourth, more than 1 1/2 minutes behind. Australian and English competitors each gained two more golds on the shooting ranges at Langkawi Island, off Malaysia's east coast.

Christine Treffy and Annette Woodward won the women's pairs sport pistol and Carolyn Quigley and Kim Frazer triumphed in the women's pairs prone rifle.

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Israel military on alert; 5 injured in clashes

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A third straight day of clashes Sunday in the West Bank town of Bethlehem left five Palestinian youths injured from rubber coated metal bullets fired by Israeli soldiers.

Meanwhile, Israel braced for threatened revenge attacks by Islamists, deploying troops Sunday to guard bus stops, shopping centres and other possible targets.

The Islamist movement Hamas has vowed to retaliate against Israel for its killing Thursday of two top fugitives, members of the group's military wing who were wanted for alleged involvement in attacks against Israel and planning others.

Hundreds of Palestinians called for revenge attacks against Israel in pro-Hamas demonstrations Saturday in several West Bank cities. At least 16 Palestinians and two Israeli soldiers were injured in ensuing clashes.

Sunday marked the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Oslo peace accords, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used the occasion to point to the continuing terror threat Israel faces.

"The Oslo agreement was supposed to bring peace. This means that there wouldn't be terror attacks here from the territory handed over to the Palestinians," Netanyahu said on Israel Radio.

In efforts to avert a possible Hamas attack, Israeli security forces cancelled leaves for police and soldiers and troops fanned out to cities throughout the country to protect shopping areas and bus stops — targets of previous suicide bomb attacks.

Despite the threats, American envoy Dennis Ross continued in his efforts to get Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to agree on a U.S. proposal to end the 18-month stalemate in the

peace talks.

Under the initiative, Israel would withdraw troops from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank in tandem with Palestinian agreement to work hard to contain anti-Israeli militants.

Neither side has reported any progress in Ross' meetings, which began Wednesday, and Netanyahu told his cabinet that the Palestinians were backing down on previously agreed to conditions.

"There was progress in the talks with the Palestinians and we had almost reached certain understandings but the Palestinians backed down on these understandings," the prime minister said, according to a cabinet statement.

Netanyahu said in talks with Ross, he had demanded the Palestinians suppress terror groups like Hamas as a condition for advancing the peace process.

The Palestinians, for their part, have accused Israel as using security matters as a pretext for delaying West Bank

pullbacks it had already promised to make.

The Oslo accords set a framework for eventual Palestinian autonomy, and since their signing, the Palestinians have assumed self-rule in the Gaza Strip and now control large towns in the West Bank.

But many major provisions have not been implemented, and each side accuses the other of blocking further progress.

Ross had more talks set later Sunday with Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh and Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat. He was speaking to them together — a break from his practice so far of shuttling back and forth in separate meetings between the two sides.

However, the talks, being held at the residence of U.S. Ambassador Ned Walker, were centring on secondary issues including the opening of a Palestinian airport and a so-called safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza.

Mubarak meets Ross

ALEXANDRIA (AP) — U.S. envoy Dennis Ross said Sunday that a wide gap still existed between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Ross met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak near the port city of Alexandria to update him on his latest talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu.

"I would say at this point that there are still many issues that have to be worked through on all the parts of our initiative," Ross said at a joint news conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa at the Bourg Al Arab air base near Alexandria.

"There are areas where... some progress was made but there are also other areas

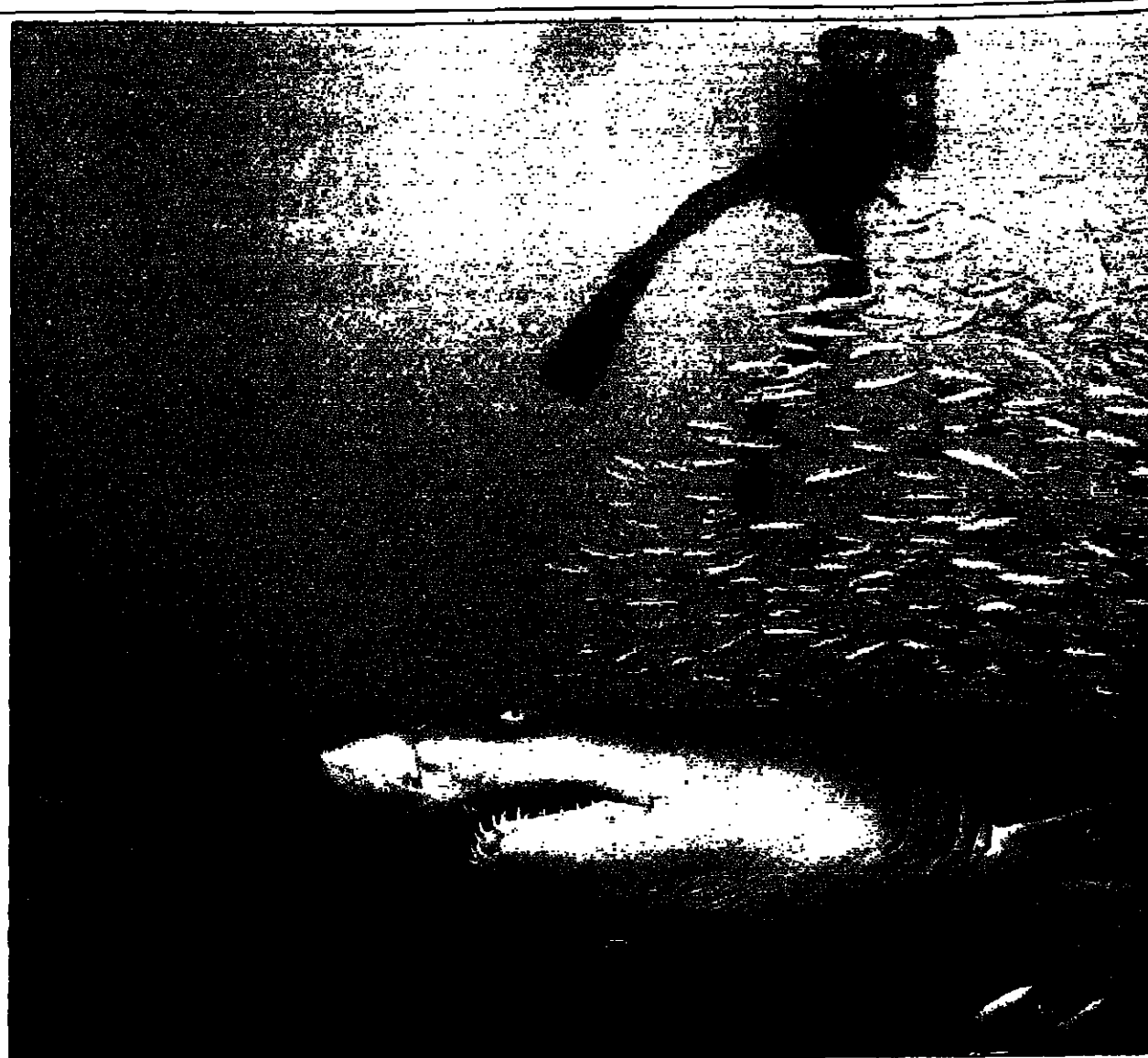
where there are differences that have to be overcome," Ross said. He did not elaborate.

His meetings with Arafat and Netanyahu came against a tense backdrop of clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces following Israel's killing of two wanted Hamas fugitives.

The Palestinians claimed that the killings were timed to doom Ross' mission.

Musa criticised the killings and urged restraint on both sides. He said, however, the necessary "calm atmosphere cannot come only with Palestinians commitment, but should also be an Israeli one, particularly where settlers are concerned."

Ross left later for occupied Jerusalem.



GETTING WET WITH JAWS: A diver swims with a Sand Tiger shark and a school of baitfish around the wreck of the 'Papoose,' a ship sunk during WW II by a German U-boat. The wreck lies about 28 miles off Morehead City, NC (AP photo)

During meeting with Cem, Khatami assails Turkish-Israeli military ties

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami met Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem here Sunday and condemned Turkey's military cooperation with Israel, saying it "shocked the Muslim World."

"Turkey should not need to cooperate with a country which has displayed its aggressive nature... and whose presence in the region is harmful to everyone," Iranian television quoted Khatami as saying.

Cem, who arrived here Saturday for a three-day visit, responded that "relations between Turkey and Israel are not aimed at the interests of any of the countries in the region," the tele-

vision said.

The Turkish diplomat also expressed hope that Tehran and Ankara will "play a constructive role for peace and stability in the region and the world."

Cem is the first Turkish foreign minister to visit the Islamic Republic in five years.

He is expected to hold talks with his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharazi focused on the tensions between Iran and the Taliban over the situation in Afghanistan.

"Turkey, which also has reservations about the Islamic Taliban, condemned last month's murders of nine

Iranian diplomats by Taliban militiamen in the northern Afghan town of Mazar-i-Sharif.

The Cem-Kharazi meeting is also expected to focus on the Kurdish question. Turkey accused Iran last week of backing Kurdish rebels fighting Ankara.

Turkey and Iran only recently put their relations back on an even keel following a rupture caused by remarks of support for Islamists in Turkey by Iranian diplomats.

Their respective ambassadors returned in May after being recalled several months earlier.

Arab League proposes Libya-Netherlands accord on trial

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab League chief Esmat Abdul Meguid proposed Sunday that Libya and the Netherlands sign a pre-trial agreement spelling out details surrounding the prosecution of Libyan suspects in the Lockerbie bombing.

"The Libyan and Dutch governments should sign an agreement to clarify all the issues pending in the Lockerbie case and in which the suspects will stand trial in the Hague under Scottish law," Abdul Meguid said.

"This proposal will be a tool

aimed at pushing things forward concerning Lockerbie."

Abdul Meguid made the announcement after separate meetings with the British ambassador to Egypt, David Blatherwick, and the Libyan delegate to the Arab League, Salma Rashed.

Abdul Meguid last week reaffirmed his support for Libya's request for "guarantees" on the fate of the men before Tripoli delivers them for trial. Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi has accused Washington and

London of planning to kidnap the pair when they arrive in the Netherlands.

The U.N. Security Council has asked U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to arrange the safe transfer of the two men to the Netherlands.

The British government said Friday it would supply Libya with "clarification" over the proposed trial of the men, suspected of involvement in the 1988 bombing of a plane over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

Kurds hold rally in Rotterdam

ROTTERDAM (AFP) — Around 30,000 Kurds, from various European countries, took part in a rally at the "De Kuip" stadium in Rotterdam on Saturday, the Dutch ANP news agency reported.

"A political solution to the Kurdish problem has to be found rapidly," said a spokesman for the association which organised the rally. He said Kurds had no outlet for cultural or political expression.

The event was billed mainly as a cultural festival and featured traditional Kurdish music and dancing. But the political and nationalist character of the rally was evident from the banners calling for "freedom for Kurdistan" and the presence of a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan — one of the main parties in Kurdish northern Iraq, and of officials from the Kurdish parliament in exile. In the crowd, some carried placards of the

Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), a Marxist-Leninist organisation fighting for an independent Kurdish homeland. The PKK has been engaged in a separatist war against Ankara since 1984. "This is a cultural rally, but in the context of Kurdistan, culture is political. The two cannot be separated, neither for Kurds, nor for the Turkish authorities," said a Dutch specialist in Middle Eastern affairs who went to Rotterdam.



PALESTINA @ EXPO 98: Palestinian Industry Minister Saadi Al Kronz (L) invites Portuguese Economy State Secretary Vitor Ramalho (C) to participate in a traditional dance, in front of the Palestinian pavilion, on the national day of Palestina at the Expo 98 world fair in Lisbon, Sunday (AFP photo)

Clinton lawyers describe Starr's report as a smear campaign

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's lawyers were on the offensive Sunday, describing charges that he committed impeachable acts in the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal report as "part of a hit-and-run smear campaign."

In their second rebuttal to Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's report, the attorneys also said Starr's inclusion of lurid details "says volumes about... [his] tactics and objectives."

The 42-page legal counterattack, released Saturday, sought to refute Starr's specific charges that Clinton committed 11 impeachable acts, among them perjury, abuse of power and obstruction of justice.

"The president did not commit perjury. He did not obstruct justice. He did not tamper with witnesses. And he did not abuse the power of the office of the presidency," Clinton's lawyers wrote.

They also set the stage for what was likely to become a protracted battle, wanting they sought "to begin the process of rebutting charges against the president — charges legal experts have said would not even be brought against a private citizen."

The president's rebuttal came a day after Congress released Starr's sexually explicit 445-page report on the Internet Friday.

Starr has been probing allegations of wrongdoing since 1994, at a cost of some \$4 million.

"It is plain that sex is precisely what this four-and-a-half year investigation has boiled down to," the attorneys said.

"The referral is so loaded with irrelevant and unnecessary graphic and salacious allegations that only one conclusion is possible: its principal purpose is to damage the president."

In its conclusion, the rebuttal admitted the relationship Clinton had with Lewinsky — which began when he was a young White House intern — as well as his efforts to keep it "private" were wrong.

"But such acts do not even approach the constitutional test of impeachment — 'treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors'."

By Sunday public reaction seemed decidedly mixed, judging by people-on-the-street interviews in the news media.

Members of Congress, many on the campaign trail for reelection, were also getting mixed messages.

Republican Bob Barr of Georgia said his constituents said they were "disgusted" with Clinton, and wanted the president to resign immediately.

However, Democrat Eliot Engel of New York said his constituents told him the Starr report was "totally unfair."

"They tell me they think

[Clinton] is doing a good job," Engel said on CNN Sunday. "What I get from my constituents is, 'why don't they leave him alone and let him do his job?'"

Most Americans still look on Clinton favourably, according to a CNN/Gallup poll taken just after the Starr report was released Friday. The poll showed that 62 per cent of Americans had a favourable opinion of Clinton's job performance, up from 60 per cent earlier in the week. Only 32 per cent said the president should be removed from office, and 34 per cent thought he should resign.

Vice President Al Gore chose not to attack Starr's motives or the report Saturday, saying instead Clinton deserves to remain in office even though he had done "wrong."

"While the president's lawyers are dealing with the details and technical issues that

are in the report, let me just say that I do not believe that this report serves as the basis for overturning the judgement of the American people in 1992 and again in 1996 that Bill Clinton should be their president," Gore said.

A crucial factor in Clinton's political survival is the November mid-term election, when the Democrats hope to close the Republicans' 11-seat majority in the House and stop them boosting their edge in the Senate.

While both parties have pledged a fair, bipartisan approach in weighing possible impeachment proceedings, the candidates will keep a finger on the public pulse as they plot their strategies.

Many lawmakers expressed shock at the report and said they wished they had seen it before voting Friday to release it directly on the World Wide Web.

Netanyahu wants 'what's best for President Clinton'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that he "wants what's best" for President Bill Clinton following the release of the report into the sex-and-lies scandal involving Monica Lewinsky.

"Bill Clinton is a friend of Israel and he wants what's best for us and we want what's best for him and the United States," Netanyahu told public radio.

Stressing that he "did not want to interfere in the internal affairs" of the United States, Netanyahu said "democracy and the American presidency are stable and strong institutions and they will pass this test."

Asked about Clinton's fate, he refused to "engage in speculation."

"I hope that this affair will be over soon and that the United States will do what everyone expects of a great power: protect peace and ward off threats," he said.

Relations have been frosty between Clinton and Netanyahu and the American president indicated a preference for former Prime Minister Shimon Peres during Israel's May 1996 elections which resulted in a Netanyahu victory.

Dennis Ross, the U.S. envoy for the Middle

East, has been trying without success to revive peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians for the past 18 months but the Clinton administration has been careful not to publicly denounce Netanyahu for the impasse.

Meanwhile, Israeli newspapers Sunday splashed the Clinton scandal across their front pages, with the exception of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish daily Yated Neeman.

"Clinton: the great shame," said the Maariv daily's headline. It also published several spicy passages from Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's report which was published on the Internet on Friday.

"The president naked," the Yediot Aharonot headlined, also running extracts from the report. Its editorial predicted a sombre political future for the embattled U.S. president.

The liberal Haaretz newspaper described the Starr report as a "stink bomb," whose wick was lit by Clinton himself, "which is unforgivable."

Palestinian newspapers were more muted on the subject. There were no editorials and only news agency copy was used. The Palestinian leadership has kept silent on the scandal that has rocked the U.S. presidency.



Michael Douglas to make first movie with dad

DEAUVILLE (AFP) — Actor Michael Douglas announced he is to make his first movie alongside his father, veteran Hollywood star Kirk Douglas. Douglas told a news conference at the Deauville festival of American film that after making more than 120 movies collectively, he and his 81-year-old father would join forces on the silver screen next year. The screenplay, tentatively dubbed "A Song for David" and to be directed by Blues Brothers star Dan Aykroyd, is in its fifth draft.

'It's a drag being in demand'

VENICE (R) — It's a drag being in demand, according to Hollywood superstar Robert De Niro. Asked at the Venice film festival why he avoided photographers, De Niro said: "I don't avoid them. But you know, would you want people to keep asking you questions and bothering you and chasing you all the time? I sometimes get tired of what I'm saying." De Niro's new movie "Romance" is a thriller about suspicion, honour and betrayal, is showing out of competition at Venice.

Striking movie dubbers take fight to Venice film festival

VENICE (R) — Striking Italian movie dubbers took their fight to the Venice film festival but said Hollywood stars whose voices they convey were silent. "The actors should be on our side, but we haven't seen them," Mario Paolinelli, who recently finished translating Warren Beatty's new movie "Bulworth," told Reuters at a hotel frequented by stars and executives at the festival. "One of the reasons we are here is that it's an international forum for foreign films — all the people we work for. We would have liked a bit of solidarity."

German library enters Guinness records book

KANZACH (AFP) — A library in Kanzach southern Germany, which measures 1,463 metres in length and holds 85,000 volumes, went down in the Guinness Book of Records on Saturday as the longest library in the world. The volumes, which include several signed by such prominent personalities as Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his Social-Democratic rival Gerhard Schroeder, are to be auctioned and the proceeds of the sale used to help victims of crime and to organise amateur art exhibitions.

Andrew Lloyd Webber to stage Action Man musical

LONDON (AFP) — The British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber is to stage a new musical based around the boy's doll Action Man. It was reported Sunday. Webber, whose hits in London and on Broadway include "Cats," "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Whistle Down the Wind," is the most successful musical writer of his generation. Next weekend a half-hour mini-musical "Action Man's Live Mission" will be audience tested at an adventure theme park outside London, the Observer said.

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